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A  
DESCRIPTIVE  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
ISLAND  
OF  
JAMAICA.

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VOLUME II.



A  
DESCRIPTIVE  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
ISLAND  
OF  
JAMAICA:

WITH

Remarks upon the Cultivation of the SUGAR-CANE,  
throughout the different Seasons of the Year, and chiefly  
considered in a Picturesque Point of View;

ALSO

Observations and Reflections upon what would probably be  
the Consequences of an ABOLITION of the SLAVE-  
TRADE, and of the EMANCIPATION of the SLAVES.

By WILLIAM BECKFORD, Esq.

Author of *Remarks on the Situation of Negroes in Jamaica.*

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“Sine me, liber, ibis in arbem;  
Et Hei mibi! quod domino non licet ire tuo.”

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IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOLUME II.

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LONDON:

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M,DCC,XC.



A DESCRIPTIVE  
A C C O U N T  
OF THE  
I S L A N D  
OF  
*J A M A I C A.*

BETWEEN Christmas and the actual commencement of the crop, the negroes are chiefly employed in what are called odd jobs, and are consequently much divided. Some are giving the last finish to the exterior parts of the cane-fields; some are cleaning the intervals; and some, the weakly ones in particular, are set in to chop the pastures, which is commonly the last thing done upon a plantation, excepting, perhaps, it be the putting in order and fencing-in those places that may be subject

to the trespasses of the cattle, in either the mountains or the plains.

In these different occupations there are but few objects that will admit of picturesque description; but in the working of the roads, which is done most commonly at this particular season of the year, and generally by hired negroes, which the way-wardens have a right to engage at so much a head, and to charge to the neighbouring estates according to their several assessments—in the working of the roads, I say, there are many accompanying circumstances that cannot fail to strike.

When the labourers are assembled into one group, and full of animation and of spirit, they all together elevate and let fall their hoes, and accompany every stroke with the chorus of contentment:—the observer seems to partake of the general emotion, and considers that as an amusement when accompanied by indulgence, which, without

without encouragement, he would naturally suppose to be a hardship and a toil.

When they are seen working in front, and when consequently the action of the limbs is observed to vary with the strength of the body, and the expression of the countenance to the weakness or the vigour of the frame; and when the exertions of the muscles bespeak the age and condition of those who work—the lover of nature and of art will be delighted with these varieties that present themselves with so much advantage to the imitations of the pencil, and the labours of the chissel.

When they are beheld in the profile, and their uplifted hoes are all gleaming together in the air, and their length of shadows is reflected upon the ground; when the curvatures of their bodies, and the inflexions of their limbs, be observed, and the difference of the sexes in their various exertions be contrasted, and the striking dissimilarity of their make be duly

attended to—the picture which all these circumstances exhibit, will be found to be not less pleasing perhaps than singular and new.

It is amusing to see them at a little distance when forming a curve according to the sweep of the road, when only their hoes and the upper parts of their bodies are perceived emerging from the depth of the trench which they are employed to drain: the voices of some are now heard to resound from the bottom, and of others from an eminence on each side, of a hollow way; the light bursting upon some, and the surrounding logwoods overwhelming others with a dark and impenetrable canopy of shade.

They are now busy in the midst of a river, uplifting massy fragments of rocks to make a fording-place for the wains and mules, the bridge having been swept away by the violent descent of the rains, the rapidity of the torrents, or the accumulation  
of

of waters increased by the growing progress  
of the storm.

It is pleasant to observe the current breaking against their arms and legs, to see the mullets glide adown the stream, and to behold the playful reflections of the sun-beams in the water, or upon the rocks, the bushes, and the weeds, which catch the light, and reflect their different shadows in the dimpling eddies that murmur on with a smooth and drowsy course, until they are absorbed by the receiving flood below.

Every object about the plantation, but especially around the buildings, appears at this time of the year to be alive: and the beating of the coppers, the clanking of the iron, the driving of the cogs, the wedging of the gudgeons, the repetition of the hammers, and the hooping of the casks, are the cheerful precursors of the approaching crop.

It must not be supposed that because the year hath passed without a storm, that the planter hath not other apprehensions to encounter, and other fears to detain his mind in trouble and suspense; for although he may have been relieved of the most consequential alarm, and consequently may be justified in flattering himself with the well-founded expectation of a favourable harvest,—yet are there many disappointments to be dreaded, which his care could not combat, nor his prudence foresee.

The north winds may, from their violence, have broken off, or lodged, his canes; the rats may have injured, and the dry weather, in particular parts, consumed, them: the worm may have bored into, and exhausted, the sap: the blast may have ruined them, or some other unforeseen circumstances may have diminished their yielding, and thus have made them fall very short in quantity of produce to what,

from

from their appearance, might have been reasonably expected.

More attention and skill are required in the taking off of a crop of sugar than the generality of overseers, who act upon common principles and general rules, are equal to. The cultivation of the land is regular and methodical; and the cutting of the canes, and the manufacture of their produce, are more directed by prescription, than conformable to expediency and art.

I am convinced that one seventh of every crop of sugar is wasted upon some properties by neglect, or by a want of foresight, strength, or industry; and much of the failure of the produce will be consequently owing to a delay in the operations of the field, and particularly at that critical period when the harvest requires both vigour and dispatch.

In that part of Jamaica in which I was resident, the crops seldom begin before the middle of January; and they certainly ought not to be extended beyond the month of May, or the beginning of June. It would, indeed, be better for the negroes, the cattle, and the mules, could they be completed some weeks sooner, that the produce might be transported to the boughadier before the rains set in, and the roads become wet and heavy.

As March and April are supposed to be the best yielding months, every nerve should be exerted, and every power awakened to keep the mill at work throughout this period; nor do I know any season of the year in which, if the canes be yielding well, that hired labour may be called in with equal profit.

Every assistance that is given to a sugar-plantation before the canes shall have escaped all expected contingency, must depend upon chance for success; but when there

there is a certainty, from the experience of those already cut, that they are in a state of perfection, they should be got off with as much celerity as possible, for expedition in the time of harvests is of infinite consequence to the quality, as well as the quantity, of the produce.

Should any delay at this particular time be occasioned, a drought might consequently supervene, which would make at least a daily, if not an hourly, diminution of the crop.

Should the rains set in with violence before the common period, the disappointment would be likewise certain; but then these rains will not, like the dry weather, so much affect the expectations of the ensuing year. Should the seasons therefore commence thus early, it would be better to leave off, for a time, the operations of sugar-making, and more profitable to employ the negroes in planting such pieces as have been already prepared, in putting in  
new

new land, or in supplying such fields as have been recently cut; and I have often wondered that this last-mentioned practice is not more frequently adopted, as it may be not only effected with ease, but without a loss of canes, as the tops of those that have been lately separated, will fully and advantageously answer this particular purpose.

Although many canes are planted at Christmas, and from that time to the months of May and June, yet very little dependence is to be placed upon their production. It is the plant that is buried in August, September, and October, that gives, with tolerable seasons, the most certain return; but that return must still depend upon a variety of causes: it must depend upon the nature and cultivation of the soil, upon the care that is taken of it in its early state, and the attention that is given to it in its progress to perfection; upon the proportionate trespass it receives from cattle or rats, upon the little depreciation

dation committed by the negroes; to the judgment with which it shall be cut and taken off the land; and lastly, much must be referred to the skill, the integrity, and the experience of the boilers.

The sugar-cane is perhaps, through all its different stages, the most uncertain production upon the face of the earth; and has, as I have already explained, the greatest number of foreign and local enemies to encounter of any plant that either contributes to the wants, or that administers to the comforts and luxuries of man.

When a plant of canes is intended to be made upon new land, it is not the common practice to dig holes (indeed it would be impossible, on account of the impediments of the stumps of trees which remain as yet unrotten) as is generally done upon those pieces which have been already cultivated; but the custom is to open the bosom of the soil, and for the negroes to deposit the tops therein as they proceed, that

that the ground may not, when new, be too much exposed, and that the production of it, when fresh, may continue to ratoon as long as possible: an advantage of more consequence than is generally believed, as the labour will be but trifling when compared to the induction of a yearly plant, and the return of produce will be annually and with more certainty given; as the earth that is to receive the fall plant will, from its first preparation until its produce shall be carted to the mill, take up the period of at least two years, whereas the ratoon comes round for the coppers in one.

The manner observed in felling wood and clearing the land in Jamaica, for either provisions or canes, is exceedingly negligent and superficial: the stumps of the trees are commonly left two and three feet or more above the surface of the earth; the roots of course must occupy a very considerable proportion of that soil which might be otherwise planted; and it will require many years before they will rot, and

of consequence before they will admit of the plough, or be capable of any other mode of cultivation.

I shall just observe, before I proceed any farther in my account of the crop, that although the negroes are at that season permitted to eat as many canes as they may choose, yet is this privilege denied them in the field before the actual commencement of the harvest.

They are allowed hot liquor from the coppers, but are not suffered to take (excepting now and then, as a particular indulgence, or in case of sickness and convalescence) any sugar from the coolers or the hogsheads.

They are sometimes given rum from the stills; but as new spirit is particularly unwholesome, nay, if taken imprudently, is often pernicious, it would be better if some other liquor could be substituted in its place; or such at least as having lost its fiery particles,

ticles, may have been improved by care, and softened by age.

A sugar-plantation must necessarily have a variety of buildings; and hence at a distance it rather appears like a small town than a contemptible village, inasmuch as in the former are sometimes seen some structures of larger dimensions than others, whereas in the latter they are uniform in simplicity, and have no superior edifice to boast.

The overseer's house is commonly, if the situation of the land will permit it, upon an eminence, and overlooks his offices, the stock-house, the hospital, the negro-houses, the cooper's, wheelwright's, carpenter's, and blacksmith's shops; and last of all, the works, which consist of the mill-house, curing-house, still-house, and the trash-houses, which are in number from two to four or five, according to the extent of the plantation, the resources of the

the materials, and the size of the buildings.

His residence consists, in general, of a front and a back piazza, of a hall in the centre, and of a bed-chamber at one end, and of two other smaller apartments that are taken from the pent-houfe of the gallery behind. Some have more rooms, and some have less: but from the obser-vations which I have had an opportunity to make, I think that this description may be considered, at least in that part of the Island in which I lived, as the general average.

In the offices are comprised a stable and a corn-house, a kitchen, a wash-house, a buttery, and a store; with pig-sties, a poultry-yard, a pigeon-house, and in short every convenience and domestic accomo-dation that indolence may expect, or luxury require; and all these are attended by ne-groes, not only sufficient for common wants, but who are absolutely idle from a want

want of occupation, and lethargic from a want of thought.

Of the public and private comforts of an overseer, I shall have occasion to speak hereafter; and when his situation, in which he hath not any thing to risk but much to gain, shall be contrasted with that of his employer, who has every thing to hazard but little to secure,—some idea may be formed of the relative happiness of the one, and the miserable dependence of the other.

The hospital for the reception of the sickly and weak, is distinguished, as before observed, by the appellation of the Hot-house; and of its conduct and abuses much may be said, much has been overlooked, and much, too much, I fear, has been inhumanly forgotten.

Of the sighs that have been breathed, of the tears that have been shed, in private, too few, alas! are the notices that have been taken.

taken. The house of mortification becomes too often the grave of thought. The eye cannot investigate the charms of nature in darkness, nor the soul expatriate in the confines of affliction.

The natural temper of the mind is supported by the fluctuations of its fears, its wishes, and its hopes: the prospects of the earth are contrasted by sunshine and by shade; and the sea is rendered wholesome by the vicissitudes of tempests and of calms: the day is the harbinger of night; and darkness precedes the blushes of the morn. Shall man then complain of sorrow, when affliction leads to hope; when it is the test of his virtues, as it will be the reward of his end?

This building has a narrow piazza in front, at the end of which is a small apartment for the nurse or hot-house woman, in which are deposited the few medicines that are left upon a plantation, and the different and necessary utensils that sickness may

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require. In the body of the house is the hall or general dormitory for the weak and convalescent, at the same time that it literally serves them as a kitchen, a parlour, and all.

On each side of this apartment are two less roomy, in one of which are platforms for the invalids; and in the other (should there not be any in the hall, which is seldom without) is placed a set of stocks, in which the lame negroes are confined, that they may be prevented from rambling at night, and that they may consequently be always at hand to be overlooked and dressed; or in which the runaways are detained for example, or from which brought forth to work or punishment.

The better kind of negroes, when indisposed, are suffered to lie-up in their own houses, whither the doctor repairs to visit them; and as they commonly know, or watch, his time of coming, they take care

care to keep themselves in readiness to receive him; though, perhaps, the very moment that he shall have mounted his horse and turned his back, they go to work in their grounds, or set off upon a visit to some distant plantation.

These are abuses that constantly happen: nor do I see how the doctor or the overseer can otherwise prevent them, than by recommending a commodious and an airy hospital to be erected upon some healthy spot that may be overlooked by the white people; and in which building there should be apartments destined to particular purposes; and not only proper beds for the sick and the infirm to repose themselves upon, but they should be provided with proper clothes to keep their bodies warm, and should not, upon any account, be suffered to walk amidst the dews of night. Every estate should have its own medicines, and be possessed of every article of sustenance and comfort that can help to

strengthen the weak, or continue the exertions of the strong.

The negro-houses are, in general, at some distance from the works, but' not so far removed as to be beyond the sight of the overseer. It is the custom now to have them built in strait lines, constructed with some degree of uniformity and strength, but totally divested of trees and shrubs; nor do I think that they are at all more mean in general appearance than those that help to form a village in some of the more sequestered and needy parts of England: they will, I believe, be found to be more tight and more commodious.

The fowl-house and the poultry-yard of a plantation will certainly have charms for a Dutchman's eye; and I cannot help thinking that Nature, in her most rural and simple scenes, is, while interesting, replete with moral pleasure. Whatever contributes to the delights of common observation, or to the necessary comforts and the humble

humble enjoyments of life, are sure to be attended with sentiment, and cannot fail to awaken gratitude: thus the chicken that pecks the grain at the cottage-door, or the pigeon that steals the sand from the borders of the ocean, are objects of thought; and as they interest our feelings, they become entitled to our protection, and deserve our hospitality and friendship.

There are few people who love nature, and who take a delight in the simple operations of life, who are not particularly and morally pleased with the barn, the dairy, and the farmer's yard. It is the first enjoyment and the favourite theme of those who have been long engaged in the commerce of cities, or in the pursuits of sedentary life, and from which they have at length retired, to attend the milk-maid, and to describe her innocent happiness when draining the milk from her patient cows, which cheerfully give their wholesome streams, and which, while they chew the cud, embalm the morning air with their breathing sweets.

At the first blush of op'ning dawn  
 That gilds the dew-drop on the lawn,  
 Shrill chanticleer is heard to crow,  
 High-perch'd upon the barley-mow:  
 Awaken'd by the lively sound,  
 His feath'ry mates attend around.  
 He scrapes the earth, nor scrapes in vain,  
 But gallantly extracts the grain:  
 The clucking hens, attending by,  
 Now pecking drop the little fly,  
 Or to their downy chickens show  
 The grain upon the fands below.

Now on the dove-cote only hear  
 What plaintive murmurs reach the ear !  
 How bowing, strutting, billing, cooing,  
 The am'rous pigeons all are wooing !  
 The sparrows too, upon the thatch,  
 Their ev'ry-varied motion watch;  
 And to the tender impulse yield,  
 Ere hunger calls them to the field.

The different sheds under which the tradesmen labour, are in general uncommonly picturesque, as are the occupations of those who are busied in them; and the varieties they represent will very strikingly admit of that kind of description in which Adrian Ostade so very particularly excelled,

The

The shape of the cask, the action of the cooper, the different utensils that are scattered about, the blazing fire, the sleeping cur, the oppositions of light and shade, and the playful reflections that the up-lifted tools occasion, would all together contribute to the formation of a picture in his very best and varied style. The features and complexions of the figures, indeed, are very different from those which his pencil had been used to delineate; but in point of dress, and the interior accompaniments of building, and the exterior ornaments of landscape, and of their objects of domestic and rural scenery,—I cannot but think them correspondent to his taste and execution.

The works in Jamaica in which are manufactured the sugar and the rum, are upon a large scale, and upon some plantations make a very noble appearance, and will require a particular description, and a very succinct explanation of their uses and their ends.

Some of these buildings admit of pictur-esque magnificence, and swelling upon hills, or sinking in the vales, will consequently strike the beholder with different impressions.

These edifices are of various dimensions, but do not always accord with the powers and expectations of the different estates.

Some properties that only make one hundred hogsheads of sugar and fifty puncheons of rum, have conveniences sufficient to manufacture, and to contain, at least three times the above-mentioned amount of produce; and some estates, that make a double proportion, have not half the appointments of those already described.

To expence in plantation-buildings, in superfluous coppers, stills, and stores, I am, from unprofitable experience, a decided enemy. I would recommend necessary, but not expensive, conveniences; for

for that which cannot be with advantage used, it must be a disadvantage to have repaired ; and repairs without method, and alterations without foresight, are frequently found to cost more than new works would have done, if planned by science, and accomplished with judgment.

It is disgraceful to see the waste of coppers, of stills, of mill-cases, gudgeons, grating-bars, and, in short, of many other plantation-utensils that are scattered upon some properties about the works and pastures; and yet perhaps the same list of stores is annually sent, and of consequence the same expence incurred: it is not so much what is made, as what is saved, that forwards independency, and substantiates the permanent riches of him who possesses them.

The works alone upon some plantations have been known to cost from fifteen to twenty thousand pounds sterling, and more;

more; when the annual produce perhaps has not exceeded, upon an average of years, one hundred and fifty hogsheads of sugar; so that in fact they may have cost nearly as much as the property, if sold, was really worth.

As the West-India Islands are so subject to hurricanes, and the sugar-works to fire, the first expence therefore cannot be said to be the last; for what may be completed to-day, as I have found to my vexation and loss, may be overturned to-morrow: durability and convenience should therefore be studied in preference to size and waste.

If the mill upon the estate be turned by water, and the stream that is to supply it be brought from any considerable distance, be conducted across hollow ways, or over arches, the expence and trouble will naturally increase with the length of work: a dam must be made, and flood-gates erected, to prevent the water from running to waste:

a stone

a stone gutter must be built for its reception; and this must likewise have a sluice to turn it off when it is not wanted to fall upon the wheel: a back-water trench must be dug, and troughs of different kinds made, and erected in proper situations, to convey a stream to the buildings, that there may be at all times a sufficiency to serve the still-house, to wash the coppers, and to answer the various purposes of conveniency and cleanliness.

The mill-house is generally a square building, if the mill be turned by water, and an octagon, if worked by mules. The former is, for many reasons, more valuable; the execution is more regularly great; and the saving of the before-mentioned animals is an object of the utmost consequence to a plantation.

As there are not any wind-mills in the parish of Westmoreland, and as I have seen but very few of this description used, I am not competent to speak of either their convenience or advantage.

The

The boiling-house and the curing-house are connected together; and those built in the form of a T, are, I think, the most commodious: the horizontal line represents the first; and the perpendicular, the last. In the former there is always a large receiver lined with lead; and one is likewise frequently placed in the mill-house, to contain the liquor that is expressed from the canes, until such time as it shall be wanted in the clarifier. In this copper, the largest in the boiling-house, the temper, or a proportion of slack lime, is given according to the richness or the weakness of the juice, and consistently with the nature and the quality of the land upon which the canes have grown; a knowledge of which it requires attention and experience to obtain.

Besides the great copper, there are three, four, or five others, in gradual diminution of size, and reduction of contents; according to the strength and the extent of the plantation; and upon some

of

of which they work, although not with equal profit, from seven to twelve, or more. Five coppers will certainly do more execution in proportion, than ten; and seven, if well attended and kept constantly flush of liquor, will turn out as much sugar in a week as any boiling-house need require.

For an estate that only makes from one hundred to one hundred and forty hogsheads of sugar, four coppers, provided the clarifier be large, will be found sufficient: for a plantation that makes from two to three hundred hogsheads, there will not be required more than six or seven; nor do I think that any single property, let it be even capable of making the double of this quantity of produce, can work with spirit and advantage more than ten or twelve.

A boiling-house fifty feet long by thirty wide, and a curing-house eighty in length and of a proportionable breadth, will give sufficient room for the manufacture

ture of any reasonable quantity of produce; and lowly buildings of timber, or wattled and plastered, will answer every purpose of the plantation, as well as those that are constructed of more considerable dimensions and more weighty materials, and which will be consequently attended with additional expence.

In crop-time the overseer should have a room divided from the curing-house, with a window into the boiling-house, to sleep in; and the reasons are too obvious to need an explanation.

I think it of consequence that the stoke-hole shed, behind the latter of the above-mentioned buildings, should be more inclosed, and rendered more warm and comfortable, than they in common are, as the column of wind that blows through them when they are too open and too much exposed, is very distressing to those negroes whose duty it is to make and watch the fires,

fires ; an inconvenience which might, without much trouble and expence, be easily avoided.

The still-houses in general are more large, and crowded with more cisterns than are absolutely necessary, or even wanted. Two, or at the most, three good stills, and twelve or sixteen large cisterns, provided they correspond with the low-wine still in proportion of gallons, will answer the wants, and reward the expectations, of the most ample estate.

I do not think that these buildings are in general well calculated to confine the heat so necessary to the fermentation of the liquor; but then, if too much air be excluded, the operations of rum-making would be still more unwholesome than they at present are.

That part of the still-house in which the cisterns are placed, is considerably higher than that in which the stills are hung,

hung, and the negroes are consequently obliged to ascend or descend by a flight of steps. One large cistern is often set aside for the fermentation of the liquor only, and another for the reception of the molasses, which the sooner used, the better will they yield. A large butt for the deposit of the low wines is likewise a necessary appendage of this part of the building, as are a dunder-cistern and a tank for the reception of the worms, in, or at the back of, the still-house, indispensable necessaries of this part of the works. A rum-house is sometimes added; which, if it can be properly secured from stealth and fire, is what ought not to be dispensed with.

When the negroes are set in to ram, and to make tight the cisterns with clay, they have a song and chorus that is peculiar to this labour, which is one of the most tedious and the most heavy upon an estate: and it is inconceivable what an immense quantity of earth, and how long a time it will take to reduce it to a sufficient

sufficient consistency to prevent a future leakage. They work very close together, and throw their rammers with the most regular cadence; while their downcast looks, the action of their hands and feet, and the swelling exertions of their naked bodies, would furnish the lover of science with many fine and manly subjects.

The trash-houses are from two to three, or four, according to the extent of the estate, and the annual expectations of the crop.

Some of these are composed of stone pillars, and of framed roofs; and some, of posts that are sunk in the ground, and which have common rafters on the top, to support the thatch with which they are covered.

As these erections are particularly open to the intrusion of winds, and are very often, from carelessness and other causes, set on fire; it is certainly imprudent to make them large and expensive, especially

as those of smaller dimensions, and more simple construction, will answer the purposes rather better; for it will be often necessary, and *always* prudent, to have them removed from time to time to more elevated and dry situations, as the land upon which these buildings are constructed very soon becomes swampy, from the damps and wet which the trash cannot fail to engender: and it is therefore expedient that it should be, before it is housed, as dry, and in as good a condition, as it can possibly be.

Some trash-houses are upwards of one hundred feet long, and some not more than fifty: but I am strongly in favour of those that are attended, in case of accident, with the least expence and trouble.

They should, in my opinion, be always wattled round, to prevent the intrusion of cattle, and more especially that of straggling negroes, who will often inadvertently throw themselves down upon the trash, illume their pipes, and drop perhaps a spark,

spark, and hence occasion a sudden and a tremendous conflagration; examples of which have frequently happened in my neighbourhood.

Having mentioned the buildings that are necessary upon a plantation, I shall now suppose them to be all in readiness to receive the different materials which contribute to the processes of sugar-making, and the distillation of rum: and it may hence be easily conceived how sanguine must be the expectation of the planter, how impatient the negroes, and how active and zealous the overseer who has the interest and prosperity of his employer at heart, and who surveys the golden promise of the field with hope, and who now beholds the labour, the expence, and danger of the former months, about to be recompensed by fine weather, and the flattering appearance of a plentiful harvest.

When the planter finds himself relieved of apprehensions, he becomes sanguine in the discharge of his contingencies and debts, and is not backward in making promises to his merchant in England, or to the store-keepers in Jamaica; and however his want of punctuality may be taxed by the illiberal, the oppressive, and unfeeling, I am inclined to think that when he promised, he most seriously meant to perform. His disappointments have, therefore, a serious effect upon him who trusts: and who shall be ultimately found to be the greatest sufferer; the merchant, who has every emolument, and who holds a security in his lands, that is in value to the amount of double or treble his demand; or the planter, whose property is tied up, and who is consequently obliged to submit to every exaction; it will require impartiality to investigate, as well as truth and justice to explain.

I purpose to dwell, in the course of these remarks, upon the relative situations of both;

both; and shall speak my mind with that candor and freedom which it is the duty of every man to do, who presumes to make an appeal to the patience and liberality of the public; and which will expect, in the place of senseless declamation and idle complaint, a fair and an honest investigation of facts.

Unmoved by insult, and unpawed by power, the man who is conscious of the integrity of his intentions, however limited may be his means, will look down with contempt upon the machinations of meanness and rapacity; as a self-approving conscience is a fortress against which the batteries of interest and dissimulation, of extortion and of fraud, may discharge their noisy artillery unnoticed and despised.

If the mind be conscious of peace, the body will not dread alarm; as he who is not delinquent, will not be apprehensive of justice.

O conscience! what an oracle art thou!  
 Destin'd to lead our wayward thoughts from ill,  
 And point our prospects to the verge of life.

The suspense and anxiety of a planter  
 is hardly to be conceived when he specu-  
 lates in either the alteration of an old, or  
 the erection of a new mill; when his  
 hopes are mingled with his fears; and  
 when he contrasts his future expectations  
 of gain with the possible failure of suc-  
 cess.

The moment the flood-gate opens and  
 the water descends, he feels his bosom  
 beat with agitation; every drop becomes  
 of consequence, and every revolution of the  
 wheel is observed with anxiety and interest.  
 The canes are accumulated bundle upon  
 bundle, the stream of liquor is explored,  
 the receiver gauged, and the time it takes  
 to fill is critically ascertained. If every  
 thing succeed to his wish and expectation,  
 he feels his mind relieved from the mis-  
 eries of suspense; he regales himself with  
 his friends, and congratulates himself upon  
 the

the accomplishment of what has been long the painful object of his thoughts, but now the harbinger of expedition, and the reduction of expence and labour.

But should the water be not sufficient, or should any impediment arise to obstruct its passage, the dam be carried away, the arches fall, or gutter leak,—it is natural to suppose that his feelings will keep pace with the magnitude of the objects, and that every exertion will be made to repair the breaches, to re-construct the conduits, and to induce a larger stream, that no future failure or disappointment may be apprehended.

Of the certain execution of the machine there can be but little doubt, as mechanics proceed upon too sure a foundation to deceive the expectations of the artist; but then the cogs may break, the gudgeons draw, the cases split, the timbers break, the rollers warp: and one or other of these accidents is always liable to happen; and

D 4                          hence

hence the life of a planter is a continual state of uncertainty and trouble.

Though there may be doubt as to its general success, yet there is something animating in the trial of a new experiment, whether it be in the cultivation of the land, or in the grinding of those canes which that land shall have produced, and which the old proprietor, at the close of life, attends with as much solicitude as the young man who is only beginning his passage through it; nor is it to be wondered at, if the mind be in a constant stretch in those latitudes in which so many contingencies of climate occur, and from which no season of the year can be said to be entirely exempt.

In every situation of life, a man has some regular occupation to pursue, or some imaginary calling to amuse, or to fix his attention; and there are those perhaps who are as much delighted with the theory that

that leads to ruin, as those are whose practice has uniformly conducted to wealth.

Some dispositions, as every one must have observed who has had the least communication with the world, are better calculated to dissipate, than to raise or augment, a fortune. The man who pursues one patient and steady line of conduct, without turning out of the beaten track of interest, to comfort the afflictions or to relieve the wants of his fellow-creatures, is more likely to attain his worldly ends, than he who has the weakness to sacrifice, not only his comforts, but his health, to promote the happiness of others.

It seems to be an established maxim, that liberality is incompatible with business; and it is, moreover, a melancholy truth, that friendship is too often sunk in misfortune; and that he who has formerly lived without shame, and still battens upon the means of others, will not scruple to injure them without compunction, when adversity

adversity and the growing mortifications of humiliation, and of want, and the infirmities of life, brought on by oppression and care, shall have sunk them down to the lowest state of sorrow and despondency.

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I shall leave, for the present, these gloomy reflections, and shall turn my description to more lively concerns;—to the negroes who, having just received the cheerful summons of the overseer, begin to prepare their bills for the commencement of the crop; and who, at this time, exhibit a scene of lively interest, and something different from those accounts of rural labour which so much contributed to swell the bulky contents of a former volume: and if the reader shall have the patience to wade through the heavy matter of this, it will, I fear, be rather a proof of his liberality and perseverance, than of his taste and judgment.

There

There seems to be a pleasing alacrity in the negroes, when they run, in playful mood, across the pasture, and endeavour to outstrip each other in attaining the grind-stone, upon which they try the temper of their bills: and a picture of a very singular cast might be made from the different groups of men, women, and children, that surround it; and upon which, while one is whetting his tools, and others are employed in turning the shaft, the rest remain in eager expectation, and seem to divide or anticipate their mutual toil.

The situation in which this instrument, upon some plantations, is placed, is not always barren of picturesque appearance, particularly if it be turned by a part of the stream of water that flows from the gutter that supplies the mill; and which being a bold and a prominent object, and distinguished, however clumsy the parts, by some kind of architecture, gives an interest to that which might be otherwise considered as insignificant and tame.

However,

However mean the manual operations of the negroes may in some instances be, yet are there always accompanying circumstances to give variety, and hence to render them not altogether unamusing.

A large sweep of arches, through which is let in a prospect of the distant country, and that country perhaps embellished with the most magnificent and lively scenes that Nature can offer to the regard of the enthusiast, or to the observation of the painter, is a common feature in a Jamaica landscape: nor are the objects with which these buildings are commonly surrounded, at all deficient in picturesque variety.

They are, in some parts, covered with bushes and with shrubs; and in others the brittle sand-box tree, the whispering plantain, the nodding bamboo, or the stately fig-tree, expand their various shades, beneath the gloom of which the herds and flocks repose to avoid the ardour of the mid-day rays, to ruminate in cool repose, and listen to

to the murmurs of the crystal spring which winds in slender rills between their feet, or flows in irriguous channels across the neighbouring plain.

Sometimes they recline under the arches themselves, and enjoy the dripping waters that penetrate through the crevices of the wall, or now and then steal out to browse the herbage that is spread around, until, collected together, they are driven from their places of shelter: the steers are caught and yoked; the cows, the heifers, and the calves, are driven to their pasturage; and the goats and sheep to their accustomed haunts. The hogs forsake their sties, and all around the works appears to be in motion. The negroes leave their hovels, and return again to their labour in the field.

Some cattle-pens are surrounded by cotton-trees of an immense height and projection of branches, beneath the shadows  
of

of which the herds and flocks repose and chew the cud; while the sun-beams at noon are glowing around, and the ventilations of the breeze give freshness to heat, to relaxation vigour, and sense to thought.

Sweet is the murmur of the rising breeze  
 That gently undulates the tufted trees;  
 When ev'ry branch unto the zephyr sighs  
 With hoarse accordance, and with low replies;  
 When all is silent, save the tinkling till,  
 Or shell wide echoing from the distant hill;  
 Or chiming bells that warn the patient flocks  
 To leave the meadows, and explore the rocks;  
 Beneath the shades of which they may repose,  
 Nor dread the vertic sun that ardent glows.

The contemplative man delights to dwell  
 Where Nature's hand has scoop'd the vaulted cell,  
 And where, from ev'ry drop that hangs around,  
 By petrefaction, into substance bound,  
 He draws some useful moral to engage  
 The youthful ear, or soothe the cares of age.

The labourers are now prepared for the expected harvest: they hold themselves in readiness in their respective houses to obey the lively summons: the shell is heard with

with a shrill alarm to call them forth; it echoes among the hills, and resounds across the plains; it seems to swell with a cheerful blast, and to invite to profit and abundance. The overseer is anxious to give his orders to commence the crop; he is the first in the field: the driver follows with his knotted stick, and his whip slung carelessly across his shoulder: the latter walks briskly to the place of labour; the negroes follow, and he shows them upon what part of the piece to begin.

The tops of the canes are now in a constant tremor; the yellow swarths are strewed upon the ground; and vigour and dispatch are observed in every *body*, and apparent in every *band*.

The driver, with an authoritative voice, cautions them to cut the canes close, and not to waste too much of the top; to separate those that are tainted, and to discard those joints that have been injured by the rats: he keeps them in a regular string before

before him, and takes care to chequer the able with the weak, that the work may not be too light for the first, nor too heavy for the last. He intimidates some, and encourages others; and too often, perhaps, a tyrant in authority, he imposes upon the timid, and suffers the sturdy to escape.

There is something particularly picturesque and striking in a gang of negroes, when employed in cutting canes upon the swelling projections of a hill; when they take a long sweep, and observe a regular discipline in their work: indeed the surrounding accompaniments of the field afford a very singular and interesting variety.

As the pieces upon hilly estates are in themselves uncommonly romantic, so are the minutiae of which they are composed not less various and pleasing. The colour of the negroes, when bending beneath the verdant canopies of the canes, and these softened by the branching shadows of the majestic cotton-tree which rises in all the pride

pride of vegetation and of height, from the lowly glen in which its ample roots have taken earth, and which defraud the minor products of the glade of genial moisture and sustentation, contribute to the moving landscape.

Behind the cutters are observed the rows of canes that glow with a bright and golden yellow ; the tyers proceed, and bind them up : the mules now traverse to collect or carry off their heavy loads ; the cattle are spread over the lower parts of the hill, and feed upon the tops that are left behind, while the wains remain at bottom in quiet expectation of that freight which is to reward the avarice of the master, by the labour of his oxen ; and what this labour is, their reduced and lank situation will too often, I fear, sufficiently explain.

The common practice at the beginning of crop, is to set-in all the able hands for one or two days previously to the putting about the mill, to cut as many canes as

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possible, that it may continue, when once set in motion, a large and regular weekly execution ; which, if the estate be not well handed, and abundant in cattle, it will be found very difficult to do.

Whenever the mill shall stand idle for want of a supply of canes, the negroes from the works are then sent out to assist the operations of the field : the business of the coppers becomes stagnant ; they get cool ; the liquor foddens ; and every delay of this kind is of course attended with loss.

When the mill is therefore put about, it should, if possible, be kept to steady work ; the feeders and the boilers would be then confined to their particular provinces, and would not lose their time in being alternately ordered from the works to the field, and again from the field to the works.

The time of crop, particularly the commencement of it, exhibits a very lively and

and a pleasing scene, and every living creature seems to be in spirits and in expectation: the negroes are not only alert and cheerful, but the cattle and the mules, having recovered the fatigues of the planting-season, appear to be fresh and vigorous: nor do they seem to require the encouragement of the voice, nor to dread the thunders of the whip; for this instrument of correction in Jamaica, whether it be in the hands of the cart-man, the mule-boy, or the negro-driver, is heard, in either case, to resound among the hills and upon the plains, and to awaken the echoes wherever the reverberations of the lash shall pass.

There is something extremely animating in the prospect of the roads between the pieces upon which the canes are carted, and the mill: the wain that is piled up with its golden bundles, the slow and steady motion of the oxen, the more nimble step of the mules, and the seeming urgency of their sable drivers, give interest and variety to the moving scene,

and which are of course augmented according to the numbers of either that pass and repass upon the resounding and the dusty roads.

When the dry weather is fairly set in at the beginning of the crop, there begins to be a daily diminution of the verdure of the pastures, and the freshness of the canes; the rivers that were lately full to their brims, and overflowing their banks, begin now, by slow and perceptible degrees, to subside; the aquatic plants that fringe their borders, and which were lately struggling beneath the inundation, now hold their moistened heads above the surface, and spread forth their shadowy leaves, and reflect their masses in the stream which runs not as yet pellucid in its course, but which by degrees exchanges its yellow tide for the brown transparency of crystal.

It is impossible to describe the rich variety of the banks of the rivers in Jamaica: the

the docks that adorn their edges, are of a prodigious and of a very picturesque expansion; and the depths of green by which they are distinguished, afford a very striking contrast to the flowing element that reflects their images upon the depths below.

Some rivers sweep through rocks, and drill themselves a channel through arches and through caves: some are observed to divide contiguous mountains; some, to flow with a more hasty course; and others, to murmur with a less noisy progress; while others steal gently through the plains, and wash, with a seeming whisper, the projecting arches which oppose, with gentle violence, their dimpling lapse, and upon which the man of contemplation looks down from the pleasing elevation, and observes the ripples break upon the borders, while he sighs with sensibility to the plaintive murmurs of their sweetly-flowing and transparent tides.

Here, the broad fig-tree rears its lofty head;  
 There, the bright mirror of the stream is spread,  
 Which, am'rous of the deep o'erhanging shade,  
 Delays its course until the sun-beams fade.

The quiescent appearances of rivers in Jamaica, every attentive admirer of Nature must have frequently observed; and when he reclines in pensive thought beneath the embowering shadows of the cotton-tree, which with all its pensile withes, and the fantastic weeds that hang and glow upon their extending branches, he feels the pleasure of melancholy arise in his mind, from a due contemplation of the surrounding, although a confined and sequestered scene.

He observes the waters, without a lapse or eddy, now hang with repose upon the neighbouring shores. The darkness of the over-hanging foliage that excludes the cheerful sun-beams, dispels not from his breast the plaintive thought; and though no zephyr shall ventilate the leaves, and bear

bear upon its wings his heavy sighs, yet he may drop a tear upon the peaceful element, which will be no sooner received than eternally forgotten.

He now endeavours to cheer his melancholy, and treads a silent path through the tangled briars and the matted grass, and behind the rushes, the docks, and the weeds, that hang with mournful pendance over, and just wet their edges in, the placid stream, until a sudden ray of light salutes his exit from the gloom, illuminates the polished mirror that now appears to move, and through which the fish are seen to dart, or where the swarming flies occasion successive dimples as it flows, or at a distance represent the bubbles that a fallen shower occasions to arise.

The stream as yet scarce ripples on the land,  
Though clouds reflected dance along the strand:  
A transient zephyr steals amidst the shades;  
And just awak'n'd from the neighb'ring glades,  
Bears on its balmy wings, to cheer the sense,  
A show'r of soft, enliv'ning frankincense;

When lo ! succeeding ruffles curl the tide,  
 Which murmur ring flow, and kiss the river's side ;  
 While, in its bright embrace, the flow'rs infold  
 Their hues, more rich than if the fands were gold,  
 The silver waters, dimpled o'er by flies  
 That show like drops of rain, in bubbles rise,

As he pursues his contemplative walk,  
 and still continues to cast his looks upon the  
 varying element, he sees it hurry on its  
 course as he advances ; he observes it flow  
 along in larger reflections, which, as they  
 catch the sun, discover the pebbles that  
 shine like crystals below, or that appear  
 like diamonds in full lustre upon the  
 changing surface.

The waters are now spread into a deep  
 and capacious bason, in which the mullets  
 are seen to shape their wanton course ; and  
 which represent, if great things may de-  
 scend to a comparison with small, the gold  
 and silver fish that curiosity confines within  
 the transparent bounds of a crystal vase,

In which the little sportive tribes are fed  
 Upon the sweeten'd cake, or crumbs of bread.

They

They are now constrained in their course to leave the depth; and urged on by a succeeding impulse, they spread themselves over a shallow bottom, which for a time confines the rush of waters, and prevents its curling precipitation adown the white cascade.

They now have gained the summit, and seem to pause for a moment before they rush amain: down falls at once the accumulated, heavy, and resounding stream; the waters below seem to dread the impending fall, and shrink, as it were, from the weight of the inundation: the cataract descends with noise and fury: it forms a tremendous whirlpool underneath, in which up-rooted trees of the most early growth and ponderous size, are instantly ingulphed, are buried for a time in the watery grave, and emerge at last at a considerable distance from their place of descent, and load with their contents the adjoining banks: it works its way under  
the

the rocks, and forms deep caverns at the bottom of the stream.

It now repents of the noise and confusion that it has occasioned, and seems to murmur like a froward child whose anger is appeased, and who, in stifled blubberings and drowsy murmurs, resigns its little breast again to peace.

The river becomes at length confined; and roaring over a bed of rocks, it rather resembles a torrent than a stream. It is here that the patient angler is seated, and observes the mountain-mullets and the calapavres darting by like sudden gleams of light: his fly is hurried away by the impetuosity of the waters; the fishes are carried out of sight, to return no more; and the sportsman has time to brood over the disappointment he has sustained.

As silence succeeds to noise, and peace to trouble, so do the waters now flow on in a more gentle course; they slowly wander

wander among the rushes, and with their  
freshening ripples awake their sighs.

Had the breeze been withheld, the bull-rush been  
mute,  
We never had heard or the syrinx or flute.

The foregoing description of a river, is  
faithfully drawn from what I have fre-  
quently seen, as it flows adjoining to a  
tract of land in which I have some little  
interest,

There is a comfort in brooding over  
scenes, however distant, which formerly fed  
the mind with rural impressions; and when  
we are driven from them, it reminds us of  
the melancholy loss of friends, from whom  
misfortune or interest has disjoined us, and  
whom we are not ever to see again.

Every little circumstance that helps to  
ruffle the current of a river, has some in-  
terest to arrest the observer's eye; a log of  
wood that sails upon the surface of the  
waters, a floating cane, a feather, or a  
straw,

straw, cannot pass by without his notice; and trifling as these objects may appear, they still have interest enough to excite his reflections.

When he beholds a piece of timber buffeted about by the whirling eddy, by which it is now plunged into the absorbing vortex, now driven up again, and now dashed with fury against the buttresses of the bridge, he may naturally reflect upon the situation of man who is tossed about by the tempest, or swallowed by the ocean, or wrecked against the rocks, or engulfed in the sand; and he may likewise moralize upon his struggles through life, how he has been bandied about by disappointment and misfortune, and at last hurried out of the world by the never-ebbing tide of sickness and affliction.

There appears to me to be something awfully sublime, and morally instructive, in tracing, in imagination, the progress of a river

a river from its source among the mountains, until it shall disembogue its contents into the distant sea.

The country through which the Thames wanders in its delightful course, is rather remarkable for the amenity than the grandeur of its objects. No resounding cataracts oppose the current of its stream; no shadowy mountains reflect their elevations in its waters; no rocks are seen, upon its margins, to represent the ruins of castles and of caves: the circumjacent scenes appear to borrow their charms from the tranquil temper of the gentle element, and no discordant sounds disturb the quiet of its borders; but in their stead, are daily heard, the flocks, the doves, the lark, the thrush, the linnet, and the wren; and so soon as the night shall have invited them back to the hanging wood, the nodding grove, the bushy copse, or brambles on the heath, the nightingales continue the rural concert, and breathe their tender lamentations through the night.

How very different must be those scenes which the borders of the Volga furnish ! How numerous must be the diversity of nations, of manners, and of tongues ! How many of the regions unexplored ; and the productions of the water, and the land, unseen, unnoticed, and undefined ! And if we compare their fisheries with those of the Thames, and contrast the productions of both in all their varieties of value, and of size, from the beluga to the gudgeon, how much must the one rise in sublimity over the more diminutive inhabitants of our commercial and quiescent stream ! a stream, however, superiorly important from its commerce, its consequence, and wealth.

The very idea of intersecting a region of so much wildness and extent, when compared to the Thames, which only waters one kingdom, and upon whose banks one language alone is spoken, is sufficient to create reflections of a particular and inquisitive cast.

How wonderful is the difference between the whale and the sprat, the sturgeon and the

the minima! and how greatly benevolent is that Power who has varied their dimensions for the use of man !

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Some other picturesque images which are observable in the time of crop, will fall in in their proper place, in the course of these remarks. I shall therefore turn to a description of the process of the cane, from the cutting of the field to its deposit at the wharf; a description which being merely mechanical, must of course, to those not interested in its manufacture, be dull and tedious, but which I am unwilling to omit, as it seems to be a connective part of my present subject, and which may not perhaps be altogether unacceptable to those whose pursuits and occupations have not ever led them to the discussion of such a plant, although every one is more or less indebted to its use, in either its raw, or in its refined and perfect state.

As

As fast as the canes are cut, they are thrown aside into different rows; the sugar-canæs into one heap, and the rum-canæs into another. A gang of negroes, not equal in strength to the cutters, succeed these last, collect them into bundles, and tie them with cane-bands together, that they may be convenient to load, and in readiness for the mules, if the land be too hilly, which convey them to the carts; but if the elevations be not too steep and inaccessible, the wains can work upon the pieces, and in that case they go forward with their loads to the mill, by which means much time is saved, and expedition given: and I must here observe, that these animals so patient and so industrious upon all occasions, are generally too much worked at the beginning of the crop, and more especially at night; nor is there sufficient care taken that the pads be well stuffed, the crooks be prevented from chafing their shoulders and backs, and that their wounds be carefully and daily examined, as well as dressed.

It

It is of great comfort and consequence likewise to the cattle, that their necks be not too much rubbed by the friction of the yokes, that the wheels be kept constantly greased, and that the draught of the wains be made regular and easy.

The cattle-men and the mule-boys, the trash-carriers, the feeders, and the watch-men who attend the pens, should be all allowed warm clothing in crop-time, as a protection against that cold which the former experience upon the hills, and the latter about the works, and in their different chilly situations at night.

An European, who would be almost dissolved were he to work beneath the vertical ardours of a tropic sun, does not always consider, when he expresses his surprise that the negroes should be obliged to labour in such an intensity of heat, that the climate is congenial to their natural feelings, and that the careful benevolence of Providence has thickened their skins, to enable them

to bear what would otherwise be insufferable: he is too apt to judge of their constitutions and feelings by his own, and does not seem to consider that, if they were removed to England, and were obliged to abide the pelting of the hail, the fleeces of the snow, or the rigours of the frost, their powers would be useless, as their exertions would be numbed; and that *their* situation then, from a contrast of the region to that in which they were born, would be more deplorable and dangerous than *his* would be, if obliged to labour in the higher latitudes.

That the real work of the negroes is not so violent, nor continued so long in the day without relaxation, as that of the peasants in England, may be collected from the interruptions which are occasioned by the frequent and heavy continuance of the rains which deluge the country for so many afternoons in the year, and from other accidental intermissions of labour, which may be derived from custom and from climate.

Their

Their exertions out of crop, are seldom required for more than thirteen hours in the day; and the remainder of the four-and-twenty, the generality of them may consider as their own, and may dispose of them in any manner agreeable to their inclinations.

Happy would it be for them, and for the domestic comforts of the country, could they be taught, or encouraged to take delight in, any sedentary employments, when they have so many vacant hours, in the rainy seasons, that might be attended with profit to themselves, with use to their families, or that might confine them, with good-humoured industry and patient retirement to the pleasing care and sober management of their children, and thence introduce a domestic lesson of internal quiet and subordination, instead of wandering abroad themselves from plantation to plantation, making those idle and worthless who naturally look up to them for example and for conduct, and thus

import drunkenness and theft, and a long list of minor vices that debilitate their constitutions, and lay the foundation of impiety, disease, and death.

A person who has not been used to the labour of negroes in our colonies, would be at first surprised to observe in how short a space of time a good gang of able labourers will get through a piece of standing canes, particularly if they be ratoons, and those be rather shabby, and which are commonly the first that are cut at the commencement of the harvest, as they will answer full as well as those from which more produce is expected, for a trial of the mill, the heating of the coppers, and as a partial experiment of the yielding of the canes.

This valuable plant requires great care and labour to cut: if standing up and well trashed, not so much as when it is leaning, and has more straw upon it; and in this state a very little is required, when compared with

with what it will demand when entirely lodged and flat upon the ground. When it happens to be in this situation, it must be disengaged of the trash; and it is often obliged to be dug out of the earth, into which the eyes may perhaps have shot, and from which may have grown out a number of suckers of considerable thickness and length.

The first cut is made at the top of the plant, if it be not out of reach on account of its height: in the latter case, the chop is made at the bottom; the leaves are divided from the stem; and the latter will require, in proportion to its growth, one or two separations beside.

Some of the tops are carried to the pens, where, mixed with salt, or indeed without it, for I have never found it of any use, it makes excellent food for the mules: what are left upon the piece, will serve as fodder for the cattle. The trash remains upon the ground, to answer the future purposes of manure; to preserve the land moist and

cool during the dryness of the crop, and to prevent the weeds from getting too much a-head, before the young stoles shall have had a clearing, and covered the ground.

So soon as the canes are cut and tied, they are carried upon very hilly and steep estates, by mules; upon flat land and easy elevations, by wains: the burdens are deposited at the front of the mill-house, into which two or three weakly or new negroes convey them, and where they are placed upon a table, or frame, from which the feeders can with convénienty remove them, and afterwards insert between the canes of the mill, by which, and the revolution of the rollers, their juice is expressed.

The liquor is conveyed through a wooden gutter, some of which are lined with lead, to the receiver in the boiling-house; and from thence, as before observed, into the clarifier, where it has its temper of lime: it is there skimmed and cleaned;

cleaned; and when sufficiently purified, it is handed forward to another copper of a proportionable diminution of size, and so on to the smaller coppers, and last of all to the teach, where the liquor begins to granulate; and from whence, when sufficiently boiled, it is discharged into the coolers, of which three, that are capable of holding as much sugar as will fill a hogshead each, that is to say, as much as will receive four or five times the contents of the teach, if it be of ninety gallons, are as many as will be found necessary upon any plantation that does not work more than a single side of coppers; if both sides be worked, the different utensils must be consequently doubled.

These coolers were formerly composed of copper; but they are now almost universally made of wood, and cedar is the best that can be applied to this purpose.

When the sugar is sufficiently cool and firm to admit of removal, or potting, it is

F 4                   conveyed

conveyed by basons of copper, or by pails, into the curing-house adjoining, where empty hogsheads are placed upon the ranges for its reception.

The skimmings, or the dirt and trash that rise to the surface of the coppers, are conducted to the still-house, where mixed with dunder, or the sediment of the stills, molasses, water, and oftentimes the juice of the tainted canes—it is, with these different ingredients, commixed and set, and then left in the cisterns to ferment.

When the fermentation has subsided, the liquor is racked off into the still; and when it descends in spirit, this first running is called low wines, and is deposited in a large butt constructed for this particular purpose; from whence it is again passed into another vessel of smaller dimensions; and at the next condensation and fall of the vapour, it comes out rum.

The crop of spirit will depend much upon the state of the canes, and the care with which those that have been tainted, shall have been selected: the general average is deemed to be one puncheon of rum for every two hogsheads of sugar; but that still-house, as I before observed, and must again repeat, is unskilfully managed, or negligently attended, or there must be some particular property in the cane, or in the land upon which it has been cultivated, if it do not give a more considerable proportion.

The more sugar is regularly made in a week, the more steady will be likewise the quantity of rum; and as the first is the principle of the last, and does not admit of any description but what may be taken from the mechanical process of distillery, I shall return to a further account of the manufacture of sugar.

The time in which it may be said that a hogshead of sugar is sufficiently cured, will

will depend upon many circumstances; upon more perhaps than may be supposed by those who only follow the common process, and who loiter on from week to week, and making with the same exertions the same quantity of produce, of the same staple and complexion, with the same indifference and inattention, have not a competency of practice, or a resource of ideas, to discover how the crop may be accelerated, the sugar improved, the labour relieved; or how the mill without straining, the negroes without toil, or the cattle without being pushed, may be kept continually at work with moderation and with profit.

The sugar will cure much faster in dry than it will in moist, and in moist than it will in rainy, weather; and the more air is introduced into a curing-house (and air I should prefer to heat), the sooner will it be fit for market: but to send it down to the barguadier before it is sufficiently dry, is unprofitable; for the motion of the carts will

will make it give; and hence those molasses will run, and be wasted upon the roads, which might have assisted the still-house, and have augmented the crop of rum. Some sugar will cure in three weeks or a month; and some will not be dry in double that time; and that which shall appear to be firm while the weather is dry, will become soft with an alteration of the seasons.

It was formerly the custom, and it perhaps upon some plantations at present too much prevails, to have not only one or two hair-cloth strainers in the receiver, but one of wire, between every two or three coppers; but this practice having been found useless, began, some years ago, to be generally exploded: it is an expence and trouble that can, and ought, in my opinion, to be dispensed with; for, if the liquor be not properly cleansed in the clarifier, it will be in vain to expect its purification in the other vessels through which it shall pass. A wicker basket

basket at the entrance of the receiver, and another to catch the scales of the teash, or any other filth that may happen to get into the sugar after it is boiled and delivered from the last copper, are as many as any boiling-house will find it necessary to use. Expence and labour are too often augmented, when in fact they ought to be particularly guarded against upon every plantation. As to the broken trash that may find its way from the mill-house to the great copper, that is of little consequence; nay, I do not know but it forwards, in some measure, the clarification of the liquor.

If the strainers be not constantly kept clean, which those who are acquainted with the natural indolence of the negroes will of course imagine to be not always the case, they will require an acidity which, when communicated to the sugar, will be particularly prejudicial at least, if it do not absolutely prevent its granulation: besides, as these strainers are considerably elevated above

above the level of the coppers, the negroes must necessarily be obliged to raise their arms in proportion, in the delivery of the liquor ; and hence of course the labour will be increased by the demand of additional strength : whereas every possible plan should be adopted to diminish, rather than to increase their bodily exertions ; and of this position, if the overseer do not feel immediately the force, the planter ultimately will.

The ladle with which the sugar is delivered, being at the extremity of a long lever, is in itself particularly heavy, but which, when full of liquor, must be consequently more so ; and if it require strength and practice to forward it, upon a level, from one copper to another, even when the negroes are just come upon their spell, and consequently fresh and vigorous—how distressing must they find it, if the labour be increased with their weakness, and if they be obliged, when weary and wrought down, to raise an augmented weight to an additional

tional height! and how discouraging, when it is absolutely known to be a work, not of necessity, but supererrogation!

As the boilers at the different coppers, when flush, or even partially boiling, are obliged to be upon their feet to attend them at least twelve hours out of the four-and-twenty, if there be not a sufficient quantity of negroes upon the estate to make up three spells, and thus relieve them—it is said that they often suffer from the hardness of the stones, or the firmness of the ground, upon which they stand, and that hence disorders of the legs are frequently induced; and this supposition, I am afraid, is but too well founded. If mats were therefore spread upon the standing-places by the side of the coppers, and if even temporary seats were so contrived as not to interfere with the convenience of the work, and upon which they might now and then sit down to rest themselves, when the slackness of the fire, the want of liquor, or any other accidental circumstance might

might give a pause to labour; it might, I think, be attended with beneficial consequences.

It was formerly the universal custom to introduce curers, or thatch-sticks, about seven in number, into the hogsheads, previously to the potting of the sugar, in order to form drains for the discharge of the molasses: the consequence was, that a hard crust was soon formed around the sides, and the syrups were of course rather confined in the intermediate spaces, than suffered to depurate. These sticks are, I believe, now almost entirely exploded; the sugar certainly cures full as well, if not better, without them; the molasses will find their own out-lets; and, let the casks be ever so tight, they will work a ready way through the crevices and the knots of the timber of which they are made; and that hogshead that goes full from the plantation, will stand a better chance of arriving so at the barguadier: as the motion of the carts will naturally break the crust

crust around the vacant *holes* which the curers had occasioned; and of course, when *they* become filled up, the cask cannot have the appearance of being full.

Some people repack and ram their hogheads at the barguadier, by which means the weight of each will be much augmented; but then, is there not much waste occasioned by thus starting the produce from one to another? Is there not much pilferage and trouble observed in this practice? Is not the grain considerably broken, and hence the molasses set a-draining? Are they not more apt to be screwed, and injured on board of ship, than ~~more~~ light, and hence more safe, as more convenient casks could possibly be?

The common size of a sugar-hoghead is forty-two inches in height, and thirty-six across the head; and it is not an easy matter to make one of those dimensions, when well cured and quite full, to contain more than fifteen hundred weight of good

good sugar: if filled with that which is manufactured upon hilly and dry land, it will very seldom turn out so much. If therefore two hundred weight more be forced into the cask, already full, it is easy to conceive how much the hoops and the staves will be strained, and consequently how liable to be broken in the cartage to the wharf, or when screwed into the hold of a ship.

We will suppose that one hundred tons of produce shall be conveyed from a plantation to market, in casks of the common size, and shall be shipped without being opened and filled up. If that quantity be started into other hogsheads, the total weight must naturally be diminished by waste, theft, and drainage: besides, if this practice be adopted to save staves, hoops, or wharfage, the supposed gain will be found not only trifling, but fallacious; if to save wharfage, it is true that eighteen hundred weight of sugar will not pay

more than fourteen hundred: but I must insist, that where it shall be re-packed, the proportion of the original hundred tons will be ultimately found to turn out less. A planter cannot be deceived in his amount of produce, if he will strike an average of sixteen hundred weight upon all his sugar made in the crop.

Having made many experiments myself (and experiments in Jamaica are generally attended with expence and loss), I am able, in some measure, to speak from conviction; and I do not know whether tierces, three of which ought to contain as much as two very large hogsheads, will not deliver their contents more free from loss and damage, in England, than casks of any dimension whatever.

The hogsheads should be certainly well cured, and quite full, before they leave the plantation: they should be carefully and substantially made; and if some additional hoops

hoops were to be added, to make them more compact and strong, the planter, as well as the merchant, and the owners of vessels, would be gainers by it.

Some overseers pot their sugar extremely cold; and some, on the contrary, comparatively hot. Both practices, I think, are wrong: the heat should be moderate and equal; and this may be easily effected, provided the coolers be of proper number, convenience, and size. Cold sugar put upon hot, or hot upon cold, are improper; nor do I think the pains that are sometimes taken to varnish over the tops of the hogsheads with that which is in an almost liquid state, or covering them with a wet blanket, are found to be otherwise than deceptive.

Of the quantity of loads of canes that will be sufficient, when expressed, to fill a hogshead, the calculations must be various, and must depend upon soil, situa-

tion, and climate; and, after these, upon experience, strength and industry. Upon strong, hilly land, they require invariably less than they do upon the plains where the juice is not so much concocted, and consequently not so rich: upon the former I have known the liquor contained in eight cart-loads of canes, sufficient, when boiled, to fill a hogshead; when upon the flat land of the same estate, it has taken at least twenty.

Of the number of gallons of liquor to return sixteen hundred weight of sugar, it is likewise impossible to fix a general rule of estimation, as this will likewise depend upon the circumstances above described: but then too, as the juice of the canes upon hilly land is more rich, so will, of course, a less considerable number of gallons make a hogshead, than what will be found to do upon flat land; and even upon that of this last description, it must vary according to the qualities of the soil, the exact perfection

tion in which the canes are cut, and the celerity and judgment with which the liquor is boiled.

I have known it take upon some estates, and in some years, from three to five thousand gallons of liquor to make a hogshead of sugar ; and at other times it has not required eighteen hundred ; and upon hilly land I have known a hogshead of sugar made from thirteen hundred gallons, when sixteen hundred would have been considered as very extraordinary yielding. In proportion as the cask exceeds eighteen hundred gallons of liquor, the yielding will become comparatively bad ; and of course the less it takes below this proportion, the more favourable will the yielding be ; so that, if the canes at the beginning of the crop do not exceed two thousand gallons, the overseer need not complain, but may push forward his harvest with the reasonable hope that the canes will daily continue to yield an addi-

tional quantity of produce, with a reduction of materials.

The more dry the canes are, the less liquor will they of course yield; but then it will go farther in proportion of sugar; I am, however, of opinion, that quantity is better than quality; and hence it is, that flat estates make more *per acre* than the hilly lands *can* do.

Upon some estates the crop will depend upon the proportion of plants; and upon others, almost entirely upon ratoons: and they will even make more from a second or third, than they will from the first cut; and there are others that will hardly bear more than a plant, insasmuch as the first will be hardly worth a cleaning.

Ratoon canes will, upon all properties, and in all seasons, generally make the best produce; yet are there exceptions to this rule. The sugar that is manufactured

factured from plants, if upon strong land, is, I think, of a better grain, though not perhaps of so fair a complexion as that which is produced from *ratoons*; and, in consequence of its texture, will be more heavy at the barguadier: what the latter therefore gains in colour, it is known to lose in weight.

Of the specific yielding of canes, it is difficult to determine, as this will vary upon all soils, with the seasons, with the cultivation, and with the time of cutting.

If plant-canæ make upon an average two hogsheads an acre round, it is uncommonly great yielding; if an hogshead and a half, it is more than one estate in ten will give; if only one, it may be a saving average.

An hogshead an acre from ratoons, is what very few pieces upon an estate will yield: three quarters is a good propor-

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tion; and half a hogshead, I fear, will be above the common medium: and these proportions, within my experience, I have seldom known, for a number of years, upon the gross, exceeded.

Some properties have been known to make a hogshead for every acre of canes that has been cut; but as such favorable yielding has not come more than once under my knowledge, I am disposed to think it singular: and I have heard of others that have made an hogshead of sugar, and a puncheon of rum, for every slave and head of cattle upon the plantation: but here I must observe, that I have taken it upon hear-say, but have not had an opportunity to substantiate the fact.

Of the value of an hogshead of sugar, much must depend upon the quality of the produce, and upon the size of the cask: sixteen pounds sterling is a good price, in the time of peace; but in that of war, the first must be bad, and the last light,  
if

if it do not exceed twenty; and some have been known to reach, if not to nett, more than double this last-mentioned sum.

If a puncheon of rum shall give less than ten pounds, it is barely a saving price; but during the last war, it frequently produced from fifteen to twenty pounds and upwards. In war-time, Jamaica is the best market for sugar, and London for rum: in the time of peace, I should prefer the former for both: the price is not only better for the first article, and the waste and drainage of the passage saved; but the seller gains twelve pounds of nett sugar in every hundred weight, and is likewise allowed the value of the cask.

A planter who is independent (but very few are so), who sells his produce in the Island, and who pays rum for his contingencies, provisions, and stores, can make one hundred hogsheads of sugar produce more than he can who is obliged to consign one hundred and fifty to Europe: and

and this is a position which cannot, I believe, be controverted.

Having already been too prolix and too minute in my description of the produce of the cane, I shall take the liberty, before I describe the continuance and conclusion of the crop, and dwell upon the different qualities of the land upon which this singular plant is cultivated, to take notice of some images of rural concern which are common at that period of the harvest, when the operations of sugar-making are far advanced, when the young canes want a cleaning, the curing-house is become full, and the overseer of consequence sends down the produce to the barguadier.

At this time the boilers, the feeders, the mule-boys, and the trash-carriers, are drawn off from the works, and are set-in to clean, and to pull off the first trash from the canes, and to put them into such order as not to require any further attention until the crop shall be completely finished.

This

This labour of the field has been already described in the earlier stages of the cane, in the planting-season, and admit not of course of more variety than has been there explained.

The wains and mules may be, indeed, occasionally employed, for a few days after the mill is stopped, in carting home the rum-canæs, or tops for the covering of the trash-houses and the negro-huts: the mill may be kept occasionally about at night, to grind the former, or perhaps during the day, should there be a sufficient quantity to express: and I cannot help again enforcing the necessary observance of this practice.

The coopers are now busily employed in heading-up the hogsheads, making tight the puncheons, and rolling the casks. The waggons and the carts are attending at the curing-house and the still-house, to receive their different loads: the first of which will, in general carry four hogsheads, or five

five puncheons, and are drawn by ten oxen; the latter, two hogsheads, or three puncheons, and are worked by eight; for at the first carting-down of the produce, I suppose the roads to be good and even, the cattle strong, and the weather dry and pleasant.

There is certainly much animation, as there is much interest, in the prospect of the conveyance of what, in its last perfection in the Island, was anticipated with so much uncertainty and dread; and the man, however little inclined to worldly affairs, cannot help numbering, in imagination, the casks that pass before his eyes, particularly as he estimates his means by the weight of the loads, and the recurrence of the journey.

You now hear the heavy waggons thundering along the roads, and behold the unwieldy oxen with a momentary exertion increase their pace upon the level land, or see their motion impelled by the following

lowing impulse adown the gentle depression of a hill, the chains rattling, the whips echoing, and the drivers shouting; the dust now rising and ascending in columns, and then like a mist dispersing in the air; while the horses, the herds, and the flocks, disturbed by the confusion of sound, and the approaching uproar, scud across the pastures, and then return and erect their heads, as if in defiance of what so late alarmed them; and again recline their necks, and browse the scanty pasture of the land, which appears or white with dust, or of a russet hue occasioned by the continued dryness of the weather.

When they arrive at the wharf, and the casks are either rolled into the stores or sheds, or into a convenient situation for the boats to receive them, the scene is various, lively, and amusing.

Here stand the patient oxen, and the wains or empty or unloading; here a heap of logwood, there a pile of boards; and  
on

on one side a mass of staves and shingles; while in the intermediate space between that and the sea is observed a confusion of hogheads and puncheons rolling out from the different buildings, and by degrees encumbering the wharf, which, projecting into the water, appears to be a prominent feature of the general scenery: the spiral masts of the craft on each side or rise or fall, according to the swelling or depression of the sea; while the boats become more and more stationary, in proportion to the completion of their loading; and these sail off with a fresh breeze (the waves murmuring under, and breaking around their keels) to the different vessels that expect them in the harbour, or stand off and on to receive the last trip of stores, or to wait for their passengers in the offing.

So soon as the first beams of the morning are observed to glimmer upon, and to illuminate the waves, the canoes are seen with emulation to cut the waters, and appear at a distance like moving dots upon the bosom

bosom of the ocean. They now attain the shipping, and either make their markets on board, or put off again, and are for a time lost amidst their shadowy hulls, and at last appear upon the polished expanse, and by visible degrees attain the shore. The little vessels are drawn upon the sand, and, either protected by sheds, or covered by the green expansion of the spreading mangrove, resign the produce of the night, with which the fisherman enlivens the voluptuary with a display of the jew-fish, the hog-fish, the snapper, or the snouk, or contents the more humble appetite with the grunt, the mullet, and the sprat.

The more opulent fishermen are now seen to put forth their large canoes, and to shoot the heavy seine with all its meshes into the cove; one side of which is protected by a tremendous mass of broken rocks, and richly fringed with a variety of trees; or adorned by rampant shrubs and spreading weeds, that begin their source of vegetation in the different crevices, and

put out and spread their blossoms and their leaves, in various and fantastic shoots, across the unequal surfaces; or hang, as if enamoured of the quiet and reflecting sheets of water that are spread beneath their penile withes and gay profusion, in contrast to the glittering sands that are faintly reflected from below.

On the opposite shore, and rising with a gentle swell from the borders of the ocean, is observed a rich and shady bank, adorned with groups of trees of enormous height, and depth of foliage; and among their tufted branches is plainly distinguished the whispering thatch-tree with its fantastic stem and pendant leaves, which seem to arrest the zephyrs as they pass, and to allay, by their gentle aspirations and their tremors, the intensity of heat which the sea-breeze, with its first visitation, begins to remove, and which, softly stealing over the glassy mirror, is seen, by degrees, to ruffle its quiescent surface, and to occasion the up-lifted waves to break in short and frequent

quent ripples upon the beach, or to beat with drowsy murmur against, or to wash the bases of, the jutting rocks that oppose their passage to the shore.

The bottom of the bay that is formed by the picturesque projections above described, appears a curve, behind which a road is elevated above the sands, which winds among shrubs and underwood, that are backed by mountains of an immense height, and which are romantically clothed with a variety of trees, through which no sun-beam darts to illumine their masses, and to cheer their glooms. The traveller is now seen to ascend a rising hill: the eye perceives him at a distance: he now follows the beaten track through the embowering lane, in which he is for a minute lost: he turns, and is obvious again, till at last he disappears, and imagination is left to shape his future journey.

The cove which I am endeavouring to describe, presents one of the most tranquil

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and pleasing scenes I have ever observed; and I have had frequent opportunities of dwelling upon its varieties, some of the leading features of which I have only mentioned.

There are several large rocks that represent the ruins of majestic bridges, and which guard the entrance into this amphitheatre of beauty; and it is within these that I suppose the fishermen to uncoil their nets, to search for riches, where they are so bountifully given to patience and to industry, in the depths of the ocean; and that they persevere, with animation and with skill, in that occupation which not only procures pleasure, as it is attended with health, but which likewise rewards their labours with profit and abundance, at the same time that it administers to the wants and the luxuries of others.

There are but few objects in landscape-painting, that are more pleasing than a sweep

sweep of waters not too extensive, and in which is plainly marked the curve of the net, the corks of which, as they float upon the surface, are seen to rise or sink according to the undulations of the wave, and in which the meshes are observed to be reflected, and to cut into angles, as it were, the crystals of the sea. The appearance of the boats from which it is launched, the picturesque attitudes of their conductors, the solemn impressions of every thing around, the melancholy gurgling of the swell that breaks around the keels, the seclusion of the cove, and the tranquillity of the ebb or flow, have such effects upon the lover of Nature, and upon the mind of him who delights in contemplation and retirement, as hardly any other pursuit can so particularly and so pleasingly afford.

The subject of fishing has been a favourite with the best of ancient and modern poets; and, indeed, every idea that conducts us to the observation of water, in either its quiescent or ruffled state, is at-

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tended with a kind of melancholy pleasure, whether it be indulged in a morning walk, while the first beams of the sun begin to dance upon the waves, or whether we observe the moon to silver over the trembling bosom of the waters.

When ev'ning lulls the zephyr's breath to sleep,  
 The boat descending cuts the placid deep;  
 Smooth flows the wave, the prow delib'rate glides,  
 And a deaf murmur soothes the gurgling tides.  
 The breeze, with gentle progres, now invades  
 The tufted woods, and whispers 'midst their shades,  
 Where, perch'd upon some branch, or wither'd spray,  
 The feath'ry tribes attune their matin lay:  
 And now th' increasing aspirations reach  
 The waves that scarcely wash the sandy beach,  
 But, soon converted into billows, pour  
 Their breaking surges on the sounding shore.

The first four lines are taken from one of the Carmina Quadragesimalia, a publication that is full of variety and classic beauty; and the originals of which, while they speak for themselves, will detect the weakness with which they have been translated.

“ Cum zephyrorum omnis residet sub vespere fatus,  
“ Lento descendit marmore cymba levis.  
“ Sternitur unda filens latè; sola æquore totò  
“ Lenia prolabens murmura prora ciet.”

The beginning of the Tenth Cantata of Metastasio, seems very apposite to the observations I have ventured to make.

“ Già la notte s'avvicina:  
“ Vieni, o Nice, amato bene,  
“ Della placida marina  
“ Le fresch' aure a respirar.”

“ Non fa dir che sia diletto  
“ Chi non pona in queste arene,  
“ Or che un lento zeffiretto  
“ Dolcemente increspa il mar.”

The night already draweth near:  
Come then, my Nicey, come, my dear,  
And from the still, transparent seas,  
Inhale the fresh and balmy breeze.

Thou canst not tell with what delight  
Th' inviting sands reflect the light,  
How plaintively the zephyrs sigh  
To curling billows their reply.

I can, even at this distance, almost fancy myself to be walking over the silver sands

that glitter upon the sequestered beach above described; that I observe in my walk the wains descending from a neighbouring hill; and that I behold, at a little distance, a romantic and a ruined wharf, that is embosomed in a rock, and hung over with withes and flaunting bowers, to which the age and majesty of the overhanging trees have given protection and growth.

I now observe the fishermen, in imagination, to thread a path among the brambles and the bushes, in quest of some retired spot upon which they may repose and roast their fish, unseen by curiosity, and undisturbed by noise, except it be the flutter of parrots, or of pigeons, among the branches around; or the scream of the aquatic birds that are alternately swimming, or diving among the rocks; or of the numerous flocks that leave the mountains in the morning, or of those that come from the distant seas, to roost upon the forest-boughs by night.

While

While some are fastening their canoes, and stretching their nets upon poles to dry, there are others employed in bearing the finny loads, and some in carrying wood, or preparing the fire for the gratifications of hunger, the comforts of warmth, or the social converse that the pipe occasions.

The ruddy flames are now seen aspiring among the bushes ; the adjoining rocks are conscious of the blaze, and the sea returns its cheerful lustre.

There is a something in the drawing of a seine, that occasions a pleasing impatience ; and the variety of fishes, of different sizes and kinds, that are taken within its sweep, cannot fail to interest our curiosity, as well as frequently to excite our feelings.

When a shoal of mullets is about to be inclosed in the net, the sea appears to be alive : they dart like lightning from the water ; they leap over the inclosure ; and

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having regained their liberty, they shoot down into the depths of the ocean.

The lines are now drawn with gentleness and caution: a resistance is felt; a turtle is now seen floating upon the surface; it plunges again to the sands: the fish of a middling size are caught in the meshes; the smaller fry escape; the larger species are taken out, and brought on shore; and the poor unresisting turtle is caught at the bottom of the seine; and while he sighs in captivity, his luscious weight is doomed to satisfy the unfeeling glutton, or is sent to England as a gift to wealth and independency.

I cannot restrain from conveying the ideas of fishing *from* the sea, to follow and describe this occupation *in* the rivers; which will, I fear, branch out these remarks into an inordinate length, and which may rather disgust, than amuse, the patient and liberal attention of my readers.

From

From the latter end of February to the beginning of April, if the weather shall have been, as it commonly is at this period, at all dry, the rivers will be low, and hence more convenient for fishing; and the manner in which the calapavres are taken, as I have seen it practised, presents a very rural and a pleasing picture.

A dam is made, before the commencement of the sport, across some particular portion of the river, by which it is known, from experience, that the fish must pass; and at the bottom of this dam, and at given distances, are deposited a number of fish-pots, into which those calapavres dart, which do not venture to throw themselves above the surface of the water.

The net is launched into the deeper parts of the river above, and is gently drawn adown the current by the persevering strength and labour of the negroes, who are, in some places, obliged to dive, and to remain a considerable time below, to clear

clear the weights, when entangled by logs of wood, or rocks, or weeds; or to draw it, with considerable fatigue and exertion, when swimming through the deeper basons of the stream. These flounce on one side, and those disturb the silence of the banks on the other; while some remain behind, to see that the corks proceed without impediment, and that the finny tribes do not escape their vigilance and toil.

So soon as they come to a convenient spot to inclose and take their game, a pleasing scene of contention is observed: the waters are disturbed, and the timid inhabitants dart here and there: some escape from the toils, but are perceived, by the eye of vigilance and distrust, to swim with velocity through the shallows which a ledge of rocks has made: they now come to a narrow passage, in which their flight is made uncertain by their fears; when all at once, with a sudden stroke, the gagged harpoon arrests their course, discolours the waters with their blood, and throws them out

out the writhing victims to a want of cunning, and a sacrifice to the arts of man.

The fish are ordained to bear their sufferings without the sighs or murmurs of complaint; and may even teach the philosopher this lesson—to be resigned and mute in death.

Who can behold, within the silver brook,  
 The worm convuls'd upon the barbed hook;  
 Or see, with brutal and with fond desire,  
 The gaudy perch in agonies expire;  
 Or, without tenderness of mind, behold  
 The panting carp resign his scales of gold;  
 And which, when once it has foregone its breath,  
 Regales the glutton by the pangs of death?

“ The veriest beetle that we tread upon,  
 “ In corp'ral suff'rance feels as great a pang  
 “ As when a giant dies.”

What a sublime idea is this of Shakespeare! How very pathetic, and how true! He felt, he wrote like man; but who can humanise the brute?

The

The net is now reduced from a large sweep, into an apparent oval: the fishermen are all attentive; they drag with caution: a fish is seen to occasion the corks a momentary tremor; and down at once a diver plunges: the silver scales of another are just seen to glimmer in the waters; a second descends, and secures his prize: a third is struggling in the meshes; and a third negro arrests it by the gills, and throws it gasping on the shore. Some, more expert than others, will bring up one in each hand; and others will ascend with their prey, convulsed in agonies, between their teeth: and I have even known a fisherman call out to his comrades, to seize upon one that was struggling beneath his feet.

The net is closed, and its contents examined: the smaller fish, as before described, are taken; the larger have escaped: the fish-pots are searched, and in some are two or three enormous calapavres found, which were taken in their endeavours to escape.

The

The dam is repaired, the pots re-set, and the seine is carried down to a lower part of the stream.

The river is now seen to tumble over a ledge of rocks, into the sides of which it has drilled a succession of caverns. The negroes dive into, and explore the subterraneous retreats, nor heed the resounding cataract that thunders over head, or that engulphs them in the hasty vortex below.

A head is seen to emerge from the depth of waters, and the voice gives a promise of abundance of game: it suddenly descends again into the noisy element, but soon rises with a double confirmation of hope, and vigilance is accordingly proportioned to the expectations of success.

A fish is driven from the hole in the rock: it ascends the cataract; it cuts its way with precipitation, but its scales are seen: the net is turned to receive him,  
should

Should he escape the aquatic chase: the negroes dive at once, and follow him into the depths below: they drive him *here*, and they overtake him *there*: he endeavours to elude them, but dashes upon the lair, and is secured and taken.

The game being now driven from one part of the river to another, they at last take refuge in a deep and capacious hole, which being encumbered with stumps and bushes, will not admit of the drawing of the seine, but which is in consequence stretched out to guard the avenues, and to prevent a too sudden escape.

It is in such a situation, that the skill, the labour, and the perseverance of the negroes, are the most observable: and it is amazing how adroit and successful they are found to be. They may be absolutely said not only to intimidate, but to drive the fishes from their natural element; for if they cannot take them by hand from the meshes

of

of the net, on account of the many obstructions in the holes to which they retreat, they will still, by perseverance and alarm, expel them from their holds, and drive them into shallow water, where they may be more easily pursued and overtaken.

I have seen a negro dive into the chambers of a rock, and in a few minutes bring out at least a dozen mullets, and sometimes one in each hand; while others, who were not acquainted with the stream, could not, with the assistance of flies and nets, even capture a solitary one.

Of all the diversions in Jamaica, this species of fishing was that in which I took the most delight, as the river in which this sport was pursued, presented at every turn some pleasing or romantic view.

In some places the waters were seen to shine among the branches of the distant trees; in others, to glide with a quick and noisy

noisy course between adjoining hills; were here collected in a deep and capacious basin; and lower down were seen to precipitate themselves in successive and resounding falls, and thus continued to vary their course and their appearance, until they became almost stagnant to the sight, and hardly seemed to creep amidst the arches of the bridge, or to wash the rushes and the grass that grew spontaneously upon their borders.

Not far from the above-mentioned river is another very strikingly romantic, from the blackness of its stream, the mango-trees that darken its surface, and the roots of which are singular and fantastic in their growth and appearance; and to add to the awful impressions of the scene, the formidable alligator is often observed to sun himself upon the banks, or to float an apparent log upon the heavy and unwholesome waters. The land through which this lazy current flows, is correspondent

respondent to its seemingly pestiferous current, and is the nursery and the asylum of toads, of sand-flies, and mosquitoes; and is not calculated for the residence of any animals but such as are expressive of sickness and disgust: and yet the mud-fish is found in the highest perfection, in this lethargic stream; and the delicious crab is fattened in those morasses with which it is on every side surrounded: Thus Nature, benevolent in every thing, vouchsafes to make that land which is not fit for the cultivation of man, to produce spontaneously, and in abundance, not only the comforts, but the luxuries of life.

While the wains are carrying down the produce to the barguadier, it may easily be imagined how many situations they must pass, that are beautiful from retirement, delightful from the lapse of rivers and the windings of the roads, magnificent from mountains and from rocks, tremendous from the roaring of torrents and the head-

long fall of cataracts, or sublime from the extremities of distance, the washings of the surge; and the interminable confines of the ocean.

In some parts are observed temporary hovels for the logwood-chippers, whose axes are heard to resound from the depths of the wood, and who, divided into different groups, and traversing the glooms in various directions, present a scene of bustle and variety, that would not disgrace a better description, nor be unworthy of the sketches of an artist.

Some are felling the heavy timber, and some with their bills are lopping the branches; while others, sitting upon the roots or stumps, are chipping off the bark, while their children are scrambling in little parties around them.

The huts that are erected for this purpose, are removed from place to place, according

according to the convenience of labour; and wherever situated, have a very simple and rural appearance. On the sides of the roads are heaped-up the wood as fast as chipped, and where it lies in readiness for the waggons and the carts, and with which they should be loaded while the weather continues dry; for so soon as the rains set-in, from the frequency of their journeys to and from the different wharfs, they are very soon cut up, and not only made distressingly heavy, but very often almost impassable.

So soon as all the produce shall be carted down, that is sufficiently cured, it becomes necessary to push on the remainder of the crop, while the weather continues favourable, and for fear that the canes should suffer from drought.

If the rains do not set in until the latter end of April, but the country be in the mean time refreshed by temporary showers, the harvest will, by that time,

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draw very near to a conclusion; but if the seasons should begin about this period, it will be prudent to draw off the negroes to the supply of the old, or a plantation of new canes; which, if completed with expedition, and a few dry weeks should supervene, the process of sugar-making will soon be terminated; and the planter should think himself fortunate in having had so favourable a year.

If the crop shall be finished in April, and all the following month shall happen to be dry, very little produce will then be left upon the ranges of the curing-house, or in the still-house; and of course the cattle will be much relieved, when the rains shall be heavy and continual: and it is therefore of infinite consequence that the mill should be put about as early in the year as possible, that the heavy part of the harvest may be finished while the weather is dry and favourable, the produce carried down while the roads are good, and that the canes, as before observed, may have  
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an early cleaning. It is certainly better to lose a little at the beginning of the crop, than to run the risk of losing much at the end: besides, that estate which is late in its operations one year, will be of consequence somewhat backward the next.

The process of sugar-making is certainly pleasing when the weather is favourable, and the canes are yielding well: and an estate that makes two hundred hogsheads of sugar, in favourable seasons, one year with another, is boiling at the rate of fifteen hogsheads a week; and other properties, more or less, according to their contraction or extent; but when the contrary happens, no operation can be more dull and tedious.

When the oxen are creeping with a scarcely-perceptible motion through the deep and heavy intervals, or their necks are shaken and their shoulders wrung by the irregular and distressing draught of the wains through the large and slippery ruts; or when their progress is impeded by the

immense stones which have been rolled in to pave those places that were uncommonly bad, and from which the rains have washed the mould, and the wheels so constantly removed them—when they labour under such disadvantages as these, at the risk of their limbs, if not their lives, a few paltry hogsheads of sugar will hardly make amends for their distress, or for the other losses that are the consequence of a late and tedious harvest.

At the setting-in of the rains, every thing about the works looks idle, cold, and cheerless: the negroes are indolent and uncomfortable; the mules droop, and the carts are very slow in the deposit of their burdens. Sometimes, perhaps, for a whole day together, there is only one solitary load of canes to be seen at the mill: it often waits many hours together for a scanty supply: the coppers are not half full of liquor; and that perhaps is sobbing over a declining fire, or perhaps all but one or two are entirely empty, and the boilers  
lounging

lounging about, or fallen asleep. The sugar begins to give; the curing-house is wet and clammy; the mill-yard is full of trash and filth; and in short the face of Nature, and the works of man, seem to put on a melancholy change.

At this uncomfortable conclusion of the harvest, and amidst the pauses which the delay of canes so constantly occasions, there are impressions that awaken the mind to a particular cast of reflection, and in which, when contrasted with the lately regular and active scene, I have very frequently indulged,

There is something extremely affecting, when there is but little water upon the wheel, in observing its revolving motion, and in attending to the melancholy murmur of the rills that gently fall from one bucket into another; while perhaps some poor afflicted mourner is heard, in one corner of the mill-house, pouring out her complaints in gentle sighs

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and falling tears, in sad responses to the lingering drops; and while she rests upon her empty basket, and lives perhaps unfriended, unconnected, and unnoticed, upon the plantation, the thoughts of her distant country, her connexions, and her friends, at once rush upon her mind, and excite her sighs into tempests, and increase to torrents the gushing of her tears; for, although insensibility appears to be the characteristic of an African negro, yet are there many who have their feelings as exquisitely alive to the melting impressions of tenderness and sorrow, as those who are distinguished by a better fortune, and have not to encounter the disgraceful persecution of power, or to bend the neck beneath the humiliating depression of bondage and despair.

When the mill is at work at night, there is something affecting in the songs of the women who feed it; and it appears somewhat singular, that all their tunes, if tunes they can be called, are of a plain-

a plaintive cast. Sometimes you may hear one soft, complaining voice; and now a second and a third chime in; and presently, as if inspired by the solemn impressions of night, and by the gloomy objects that are supposed to dwell around, a full chorus is heard to swell upon the ear, and then to die away again to the first original tone.

The style of singing among the negroes, is uniform: and this is confined to the women; for the men very seldom, excepting upon extraordinary occasions, are ever heard to join in chorus. One person begins first, and continues to sing alone; but at particular periods the others join: there is not, indeed, much variety in their songs; but their intonation is not less perfect than their time.

A moon-light night upon a plantation is remarkably beautiful, and causes every object to assume a solemn and a romantic appearance. The overseer's house, with the open piazza in front, illuminated by the

the rays which play upon the walls, or dart through the doors and windows; the solemn and the spreading shades which are occasioned by the works; the reflections of the arches, over which the water is carried to the mills; an immense fig-tree, whose top is silvered with the playful light, whose branches receive and divide the rays, and whose massy shadows extend for a considerable distance upon the ground, and among which a solitary steer perhaps, having broken from the pens, or strayed from the fattening pasture, is just perceived to shake his head, impatient of the mosquitoes that swarm around—these different images cannot fail to contribute their interest to the rural scenery, and to fix the eye in contemplation of the splendid, or in contrast of the gloomy objects, and to fill the mind with the most awful, the most simple, and the most tender impressions.

The contemplative man is enamoured of night; and whenever he directs his regard,  
and

and elevates his thoughts, to that distant and stupendous vault in which the silver moon then rides triumphant in her zenith, and by her proximity to earth eclipses the lustre of the more distant stars, and spreads a veil of glory over what would be, in her absence, the unseen canopy of nature, and the bond of silence and of sleep—the contemplative man, I say, who is struck with these images and these reflections, cannot help looking into his heart, and pouring out his soul in penitence and hope, in full confidence in the tender mercies, and in patient acquiescence in the steady justice, of his Maker.

What impressions, on the contrary, can a fulgent sun and a gaudy day inspire!

Should the heat be intense, every one complains with petulance of the fervor of the noon-tide rays: should those be clouded, the same fault is found with obumbration: if the weather continue too long dry, the man of interest repines; if

if too long wet, he still is discontented: and lastly, if the seasons should be marked by temperate vicissitudes, he then inveighs against the instability of the climate. In short, every individual seems to be more or less dissatisfied with day: but where is he who does not look forward with impatience to night?

The man of gallantry and fashion is impatient for the hour that favours seduction, or that offers him an opportunity to shine in the societies and public resort of wealth and consequence; the moth of the day exchanged for the glow-worm of night, or rather for the *ignis fatuus* that sends forth a ray to lead to darkness and destruction.

The patient hind looks forward to the moon-light hour, as the invitation to repose, and blesses those friendly beams that conduct him on his way, and that enable him, without expence or danger, to regain his cottage.

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The traveller is grateful for the benignity of its beams, nor needs inquiry to direct him to his inn.

The philosopher is wrapped in the awful contemplation of the scenes around, and accounts for the silver lustre that adorns the groves, the rivers, and the lawns, and for the chilly dews that descend in pearly mists to refresh the earth, and for the genial profusion of which the inhabitants of Lima and of Egypt are under such transcendent and eternal obligations.

But it is the astronomer who, above all, is interested in the sublime observance of a cloudless night, when, forgetting the world as a sensualist, and lost in himself as a man, he explores the argent luminary, and considers it only as a glittering speck of sand in that luminous ocean of glowing suns, by which such myriads of invisible worlds are so stupendously,

dutifully, so regularly, and so silently irradiated.

How sublime is the idea of him who holds an intercourse with the heavenly bodies, and is even sufficiently aspiring to claim in his works, a converse with his Creator; to investigate the laws which he has imposed, to define his wisdom, to ascertain his ends, and to assert with confidence that what he has done cannot be otherwise than perfect !

If such an idea be sublime, how benevolent must be that Power who has entrusted his secrets to man; who has made him the partaker of his benefits, and the expounder of his will ; and who, descending from those transcendent heights in which his favoured angels dare not look up to the effulgency of his rays, has even condescended, from his inordinate goodness and mercy, to send down a Visitor, short only of himself in perfection, to take upon himself the same habits of misery, with the disgrace

disgrace of his condition, to teach him a life of justice and obedience, that he may taste comfort upon earth, and thereby secure a promise of blessings hereafter.

But it is the child of sorrow who ought in an especial manner to bless the night that whispers to his sighs, and that weeps to his tears; that seems to feel with pity, and to melt at, his afflictions, and which invites him to silence, and calms him to repose; for the most heavy sufferings must lose their force by time, and the most watchful eye be at last depressed by sleep.

The innocent man, however wretched in the day, may be composed and happy in his slumbers, for the remembrance of misfortunes does not always exist in dreams: but let the guilty wretch beware how he dare commit his thoughts to night; let him reflect upon those lines which Shakespeare has put into the mouth of Richard:

"O gentle

" O gentle Sleep ! how have I frighted thee ?  
 " But thou no more wilt weigh my eye-lids down,  
 " Or steep my senses in forgetfulness!"

Let him reflect upon these lines, and then commune with his heart, and try if it can be at peace.

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As I have enumerated the different objects of rural impression, as they arose in my mind while I was describing the progress of the crop, and have ventured to intrude the reflections they occasioned; I shall now suppose it to be entirely concluded, and that the young canes and the ratoons are getting their first cleaning after its termination; that poison is, according to custom, strewed over the different pieces, for the destruction of the rats; and that no one thing concerning sugar-making is left, for the season, undone, excepting the remnant of the produce that is not sufficiently cured to be sent down to the wharf, but which will, of course, be shipped before the month of August. I shall therefore proceed to a description

description of the plantain-tree; a production which is in general supposed to be inferior in value, but is in some instances superior, to the boasted riches of the sugar-cane.

I shall be, I hope, excused, if I minutely describe the nature of this plant, the soil and situation in which it is preferably cultivated and found to thrive, the manner in which the land is prepared for its reception, and the method in which it is inhumed; the particularities of its growth; its appearance, as well in its early as in its progressive state; the use to which its fruit is converted, when it has attained its period of maturity; and how it turns out at last to profit, as manure.

All kinds of ground provisions and corn are, as well as the plantain, successfully cultivated in the mountains; but as this is done by the negroes in their own grounds, and on those days which are given to them for this particular purpose, it does not enter

into the mass of plantation-labour : it may be however noticed, that some idea may be conveyed of the manner in which they consume or employ that time which is given to them either for relaxation or profit.

The humanity of individuals in England, is too apt to exaggerate the real labour and sufferings of the negroes in Jamaica ; and I should be sorry, were I even of sufficient consequence, to advance one word that could, in any instance, tend to the suppression of a sigh in their particular favour. Their condition alone, independently of any abuses to which a state of bondage may be subject, is sufficient to awaken the commiseration of the most unfeeling ; but yet let not the tongue of Benevolence in too peremptory a manner insist, that slavery like theirs is cut off from every enjoyment,

Let Compassion turn the eye, with sympathy of heart, to those thousands who weep

Weep under the pangs and disgrace of personal, and perhaps unmerited, confinement; who lament, in solitary exclusion, the loss of liberty; or who are disturbed, by noise and blasphemy, from brooding over in quiet sorrow, those disappointments they have suffered, or those miseries they endure.

If there be twenty thousand persons confined in the different gaols of the kingdom, for debt; and if it be supposed that the personal durance of one has an effect upon either the means or the comforts of *five*—how very great must be the annual calculation of misery! what affliction must be felt by families, what despondency be the fate of individuals!

Of the numbers that die in the houses of mortification and of shame, from a bare reflection of their condition, the calculation is more considerable than the interested and the unfeeling will be inclined to suppose; for if an estimate were to be

made of the broken-hearted alone, independently of those who actually perish for want of the common necessaries and supports of life, the amount would shock the philanthropist, as it ought to awaken the legislator, to interest the citizen, and to shame the man. Happy are those, in some instances, who are without property, and are consequently ignorant of law! Such are the *peasantry* in most countries, and such are the *slaves* in all.

It is more particularly in England, the land of boasted freedom, that one ~~man~~ presumes to have a summary right to attach the person of another, and to overwhelm with shame and sorrow his benefactor and his friend. It is in the power of a mean and an insolent creditor, without producing an honest testimony of his debt, to consign to mortification and despair, the life of him who is willing, and who would be able, were his means not sequestered to gratify the rapacity of others,

others, to discharge his demand with punctuality and honour.

The person of no one is safe, who owes ten pounds, although he may have a hundred in his pocket to pay it, if the wretch to whom he is indebted this paltry sum, shall either dislike the cut of his face, shall have imagined some personal slight, or shall wish, from an insolent malignity of heart, to expose him to private mortification, and to disgrace him by public shame.

How seldom do individuals express any compassion for those who owe them money! Humanity is buried in interest; and he who would squander hundreds of pounds to gratify his ostentation and his pride, would not give one shilling to rescue a suffering wretch from want and misery: and there are even numbers among those who have subscribed so largely towards the liberation of negroes, who would not cancel a debt of fifty pounds, to relieve

a human creature, of their own religion and colour, from the disgrace of confinement, and the confines of despair.

By whom are the patient soldiers, and the much-enduring seamen, pitied ? The former are swept away by the scythe of death, like cowslips in a field ; and yet no one seems to care whether they existed, or they died,

How many thousands of the latter description of men are annually sacrificed to famine and disease, without even partaking of individual commiseration ! and what numbers are swallowed up by that tremendous and voracious element which, indignant at the presumption of man, has strewn rocks and quick-sands in his way, to forewarn him of his rashness, to point out his danger, and, these neglected, to convince him of his end !

The late awful spectacle exhibited at Yarmouth, must surely congeal the blood  
of

of every man of feeling, who shall suffer himself to form an idea of the domestic affliction that must consequently ensue; and yet the impression of the scene may wear away with the hour that produced it; and he who was not a witness of the destruction, may not anticipate the miseries it has occasioned: nay, although it may be in some instances a public loss, yet, after the first affected sigh of surprise shall have evaporated, all future exclamation may become for ever suppressed.

How seldom does humanity take an interest in the labour and confinement of the galley-slaves, who, chained to the oar, and scarcely clothed, and barely fed, are obnoxious to daily toil and nightly stench; and that covering which protects them from the beams of day, at the same time expels that air which might help to refresh their languid bodies, and to cheer their drooping minds. So little is their unhappy fortune commiserated, that the inhuman have been sometimes known to take pleasure in their

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sufferings, and have even beheld without compunction their unremitting exertions lead to death.

How enviable is the real situation of a good *nigro*, to any of those of the above description! These last have not any time they can call their own; whereas the *former* has many weeks, nay months, that he can apply according to the bent of his inclinations, and for which he is not accountable to any one.

The manufacturer, the artisan, and the mechanic, cannot be said to enjoy their leisure; for these must work to ward off famine; and if they take but one day in the week, excepting Sunday, to themselves, it is considered as a theft upon their families; and they will consequently feel distress; besides, they are obliged to work every hour in the day, and to carry their labour likewise into the night; whereas the occupations of the *nigro* are not so unremitting; and, seven months in the year at least, before

six o'clock in the morning, and after seven at night, his personal attendance is seldom required, and it is of course dispensed with. He has every Sunday throughout the year to himself, every other Saturday out of crop, two or three days at Christmas, many days in the rainy seasons, and afternoons at other times besides: and he is frequently laid-up for days, by imaginary illness; and in which he is perhaps too often indulged.

Having seen it asserted in the public prints, that the negroes in the West-India Islands are not allowed any specific time for relaxation, I have been consequently induced to state the leisure they actually enjoy; and I could likewise enumerate many other indulgences which they experience, were I not apprehensive that I might be considered partial: but I must here take the liberty to enforce, a second time, an observation I have before made; and those who interest themselves so much in the fate of the slaves, will, I am

am sure, excuse me when I assert that the planter must be a real gainer by every reform that can immediately or ultimately tend to the comfort and happiness of those upon whose labour he is dependent for his own felicity and wealth ; and he should be the first to come forward and enforce every benevolent institution that can either meliorate their situations, or soften the appellation, or suppress the rigours of bondage.

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It is now time to return to my promised subject,

The plantain-trees are propagated from suckers that grow out of the parent stem; and when they are cultivated upon flat land, the holes in which they are set are drawn in strait lines, and about ten or twelve feet asunder. One large plant, or two small ones, are deposited in each bed; between these, are induced one or two rows of cocos; and between these again, is planted corn: and the same method

thod is observed and practised, wherever the nature of the land shall be sufficiently level to admit of it.

This valuable production will certainly in general thrive best in the mountains, where the frequency of rains, or the constancy of the dews, promote its growth, and refresh its vegetation; and the more new the land, and the more deep the mould may happen to be, the more luxuriantly will it thrive, the more large and abundant will be the produce, and the longer will it continue without the necessity of a second plantation.

The corn will be ripe in about five months; the cocos may be despoiled of the excrecent roots, or fingers, in seven or eight; and the heads, in ten or twelve: but still the abundance and the perfection of the crop will greatly depend upon the time in which the plant was made, the nature of the land, the care that has been taken of it, and the various seasons by which it has been

been either restrained in its growth, or brought forward to maturity. What makes the coco particularly valuable, and the reason why it should be cultivated in preference to any other provisions of the country, is the singular property it has of remaining many months uninjured in the ground, after it shall have attained its utmost perfection.

The yam is likewise a very fine vegetable, and of which there are two kinds, both cultivated in the same manner, but gathered in at different seasons.

The negro yam is rather bitter, and by no means so substantial as the other species, which is distinguished by the appellation of flower-yam, to denote its superiority.

These ground provisions will not keep so long in the earth, in the first plant, as the coco will; but when once they have taken root, they are not easily eradicated, and hence furnish, about Christmas, to those

those who are industrious, a temporary supply of wholesome food; for old yams are certainly preferable, in nutriment and taste, to the new.

This vegetable is raised from cuttings of the root; every one of which is planted upon a little hillock of earth; and so soon as the shoots are sufficiently strong, they are supported by sticks, upon which they twine and bear a seed, which is likewise used for the reproduction of this wholesome plant.

The leaves of the cocos are broad and succulent, and are excellent food for hogs; whereas those of the yam are small, and not convertible to any useful purpose.

The former resemble a bed of docks; the latter, if the sticks be tall, are not in appearance much unlike a diminutive hop-ground, when full of leaves.

Of

Of the cassavi, there are two kinds, the bitter and the sweet. The first is poisonous; but when the juice is expressed, it becomes a very wholesome, but in its raw state a very insipid, food; but when toasted, it is more palatable: and some people, particularly the French, I am told, prefer it in their colonies to any vegetable whatever: they grind it as fine as powder, mix water with it, and use it in this state.

The sweet cassavi is cultivated like the bitter, from cuttings of the branches; is not in the least deleterious, but is not held in the same estimation with the other. The roots only, of both kinds, are the parts that are eaten; and those of the bitter will remain uninjured in the land for many months, if not for years. As these productions are not cultivated in large spots, they have not a picturesque appearance.

The

The Eboetoyer is raised with most success in brick-mould land, upon the banks of rivers, and in which soil the produce is abundant. It has heads and fingers like the coco; is apt to scratch the mouth, if not properly boiled; but is otherwise an agreeable root, and in taste resembles an artichoke bottom.

The sweet potatoe is among the minor provisions of the country; and where the land is loose and favourable, its returns are very great: and when a large spot of ground is covered with the leaves of this vegetable, it makes a verdant and a pleasing appearance.

The plantain-tree, in point of nutriment and use, is, in the line of provisions, the staple of the country; and is certainly one of the most valuable vegetables in the world. From its first plantation until the time it fructifies, is about nine or ten months; but its growth and maturity will depend a great deal upon the nature of

of the soil, the kindness of the seasons, and the care which shall have been taken of it in its progress to perfection.

I have known the plantain shoot forth, and the fruit become full, according to the term adopted by the negroes, and which expresses the first state in which it is fit for use, in less than eleven; but I believe that the average time in which it attains it, will be found to be between fourteen and fifteen, months.

If it be not gathered, or cut, when it shall have arrived at its perfect growth, it will be seen by degrees to lose its vivid appearance, to turn from green to yellow, and at last to become quite ripe; in which state it is a delicious sweetmeat, and not unlike the banana in taste, and which tree it resembles in growth and appearance, the stem of the latter being only distinguished, independently of its fruit, by streaks and spots of black.

The

The common height of this tree will, I think, be found to be from twelve to twenty feet; the leaves shoot out from the centre, are very long and broad; they tremble to every breeze, are shredded by the least wind, and they fall a victim to the slightest blast. It is perhaps, through all its stages, one of the most beautiful, as it is next to the sugar-cane the most valuable plant, in the West-Indies.

From the time that it shoots forth its first leaf, an almost visible increase of vegetation can be daily observed; and in proportion as the stem rises in height, and swells below, the leaves are seen to cluster and to expand above. They are at first of a yellowish green, and sink imperceptibly into darker shades, until they appear, at a little distance, to be almost black: but when the fruit begins to ripen, they are seen to change their appearance, and to verge every day more and more near towards a russet yellow, until they become at last of the colour, and par-

take of the property of straw, and are used by the negroes as thatch to cover their houses.

So soon as the fruit shall be in that state which is called *full*, the tree, which bears but one bunch at a time, consisting of from thirteen to twenty or thirty plantains, is cut down; and being left at the root, it gradually decays; and being replenished with water, it supplies with moisture, and serves as manure, the progeny of suckers that shoot out around, in proportion to the richness of the soil, its protection from the trespass of cattle, the frequency of showers, and, more than all, the moderation of the winds.

Some roots will throw up, and maintain, from three or four to fifteen, twenty, or even a more considerable number of successive plants; so that, if no accidents of dry weather shall happen to burn them up, or hurricanes to break or throw them down, they will remain in continual bearing for a number of years, and will give  
more

more nutriment to the land than they take from it.

The interior part of the tree is good food for cattle and hogs; and the latter will thrive upon the off-ssets of the roots; which become almost as hard as cocos, and may be applied with advantage to the purpose I have just described.

The plantain-tree, when it first puts forth its fruit, is a very beautiful production: it is enveloped in a thick leaf of a purple colour, which is striped with a varying shadow of the same tint, and which, in point of feel, is like the sensation of the finger upon velvet; and which, as the produce swells, is gently displaced, and consequently shews the nature of its growth.

In the early state of fructification, the plantains appear to be all compressed together in their verdant bed; they afterwards by degrees expand, and stand out

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distinctly separate from one another. They are at first of a very light green, and become more and more dark, until they arrive at that perfection which is short of a tendency to ripeness; and then, as I before observed, if they be not cut down, they will change their colour, and assume that of a deep and glowing yellow.

Of the fruit there are different sizes: those that are produced in the mountains are the largest, and are distinguished by the negroes under the appellation of horse plantains: the smaller kind is called the maiden plantain; and this grows in clusters like the banana, and is preferable, in point of taste, to those of larger dimensions.

When the outside husk is taken off, which when boiled makes excellent food for swine, the fruit appears to be of a whitish cast, and is, without any further preparation, either roasted, boiled, or beat-up into a kind of paste, which the white people, as well as the negroes, are accustomed

customed to eat with pepper pot, under the vulgar name of tum-tum.

The plantain I should suppose to be the finest vegetable in the world; and from the partiality with which it has been always mentioned by circumnavigators, and even in those regions in which the bread-fruit abounds, it is natural to suppose that it has the preference of this highly-vaunted and singular production.

The bread-fruit tree, if it has been introduced, has not yet reached a state of fructification in Jamaica; and whether or no it will thrive in that latitude, or the estimation of it will be preferred to that of the plantain, it will, from the nature of its propagation, require some time to determine.

The tardiness of its growth, when compared to the celerity of the vegetation of the former; the quantity of land over which, from its size and the expansion of

its branches, it must necessarily extend; the number of years it is known to take before it begins to yield; its not bearing constantly all the year around; its subjection to the devastations of the hurricane, by which it may be either deracinated, or its produce be swept off—all these circumstances combined, very strongly incline me to believe that the plaintain-tree, where it thrives, and is protected from the visitations of the winds, is guarded against the trespasses of the cattle, and the wanton destruction of man, will be ultimately said to be the most valuable plant, and that upon which may be placed the most certain dependence.

The plaintain-tree will yield more fruit in the same proportion of ground, will sooner recover its growth and bearing after the destructive fury of the elements, and will equally answer in a state of ruin, and after it shall have acquired perfection, the salutary purposes of fodder and manure.

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The manner in which the negroes occupy themselves in their grounds is rather an employment than a toil, particularly if the wood be felled, and the land be cleared : but if they have heavy timber to cut down, the labour will be much, and the danger will be great; for they often get maimed or killed in this precarious operation, in which are required not only strength and skill, but likewise foresight.

They generally make choice of such spots of land for their grounds as are encompassed by lofty mountains ; and I think that they commonly prefer the sides of hills which are covered with loose stones, to the bottoms upon which they are not so abundant. Some will have a mixture of both, and will cultivate the plaintain-tree upon the flat, and their other provisions upon the rising ground ; and some will pursue a contrary method ; for in the choice as well as change of situation, they seem to be directed more by novelty and

L 4 caprice,

caprice, than by convenience or expediency.

Some negroes will plant, and keep clean, a very large proportion of land ; some will have but little, and will but negligently attend to that ; and others will not cultivate any at all, but will entirely depend upon the labours of the industrious, and destroy in proportion to their indolence.

They prepare their land, and put in their different crops on the Saturdays that are given to them, and they bring home their provisions at night ; and if their grounds be at a considerable distance from the plantation, as they often are to the amount of five or seven miles, or more, the journey backwards and forwards makes this rather a day of labour and fatigue, than of enjoyment and rest ; but if, on the contrary, they be within any tolerable reach, it may be said to partake of both.

On

On Sunday they carry their riches to market, for such the produce of a good ground to an industrious negro may with propriety be called ; and if they have only this day in the week, as is commonly the case throughout the crop, they must go to the mountains early in the morning to search for provisions, that they may be in time to barter or to vend them at the well-known town, and to which they will repair, although it should be ten, or even a more considerable number of miles from the plantation ; and it is astonishing what immense weights they will carry upon their heads at this extended distance, with what cheerfulness they will undertake the length, and with what spirit and perseverance they will overcome the fatigue, of the journey.

It must be obvious to every one, of what advantage it is to have the negro grounds as contiguous as possible to the estate ; for although to an able negro the extraordinary distance of a few miles may not be  
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of consequence, yet to the old and infirm, and particularly to the children, it is a circumstance of present, as it may be found to be an object of future importance.

Some portion of ground adjoining to every plantation should be set aside for the weakly, and should be cultivated for the superannuated, negroes; a description of the human species who, having consumed the vigour of youth in the service of their masters, are too often neglected, and left a prey to disease and want at the close of life, or are expected to depend upon their own feeble exertions, or upon the support of their children and friends, for what they are entitled, not only from humanity but justice, to receive from the hand of him whose means have been augmented by their industry and toil.

The negroes, when working in their grounds, exhibit a picture of which it will be difficult to give a minute description.

They

They scatter themselves over the face, and form themselves into distinct parties at the bottom, of the mountains ; and being consequently much divided, their general exertions can be only observed from a distance.

If the land be hilly, it is generally broken by rocks, or encumbered with stones ; the first they cannot displace, but the last they gently remove as they proceed in their work, and thus make a bed for the deposit of the plantain-fucker and the coco, or of the corn and yam.

Upon these occasions they move, with all their family, into the place of cultivation ; the children of different ages are loaded with baskets, which are burthened in proportion to their strength and age ; and it is pleasing to observe under what considerable weights they will bear themselves up, without either murmur or fatigue. The infants are flung at the backs of the mothers,

mothers, and very little incommoded them in their walks or labour.

The negro grounds, when highly cultivated and kept in order, are very pleasing to the eye, and have a double interest upon the mind of the observing and benevolent planter, who cannot fail to trace to their proper source the hand of nature that so abundantly supports the exertions of industry, and converts to profit the hand of toil.

When the plantain is cultivated on the side of a hill, or in the bosom of a glen, it is, in such a situation, very seldom obvious to the sunny rays; but is, on the contrary, if not invigorated by frequent showers, at least sustained by constant dews; and hence it grows and expands in a superior pride of strength and vegetation. The stem is thick, the leaves are long, the fruit is large, the bunch is heavy; and as this beautiful production is seen in groups in those particular spots congenial to its perfection of growth, and which com-

commonly is observed to darken with its green umbrellas the descent of hills, or the silent bosom of a forest-bounded glade, it seems to invite the labourer, after the fatigues of the day, to shadows, contemplation, and repose.

Very short indeed is the period of time when a sun-beam hovers to dispense its warmth, and to invigorate the produce of these retreats; and hence the darkness of the verdure, and the expansion of the glooms: for although warmth be necessary to every thing of vegetable existence, yet too much heat will dry up the sources of fecundation, and occasion the fruit to wither at least, if not to die.

I have generally observed that the plantain-tree flourishes most in cockpits, surrounded by rocks or woods; and I cannot help attributing this observation to the partial exclusion of the vertical rays: and it seems to be worthy of notice that the coco will thrive, not only in these sequestered situations,

situations, but likewise under the shadowy leaves of the valuable production above described.

The banana and the plantain-tree are seen to grow with much luxuriance around the huts of the watchmen, whether they be situated upon the mountains, or observed upon the plains ; and they certainly contribute much in appearance to the rural scenery.

A picturesque hovel at the foot of a mountain, in the neighbourhood of a rock, and at the bottom of which shall be seen to yawn perhaps a romantic cavern ; a small spot of ground beside the road, enclosed by penguins, and here and there a broken palisado, as if to invite a ray of light to dart across the crevices ; a narrow and a winding path that leads the enquiring stranger to the open wicket of the thatch-adorned mansion ; a group of full and expansive banana and plantain trees, that wave over the ridge, and shew their green  
or

or yellow fruit, at every aspiration of the breeze; and last of all, the shredded leaves that look like ribbons fluttering in the air, that ruffle or whisper to the passing wind, are objects of rural impression in every part of this romantic island.

When these picturesque trees are cultivate in large fields upon the plains, are planted with regularity and care, have been well attended and cleaned; when the seasons have been favourable, and they have consequently attained that height from which the appearance of the fruit may be soon expected, it is hardly possible to conceive a prospect more solemn, gloomy, and impressive, than is exhibited in the verdant aisles which the spreading gloom occasion, and which at a little distance appear to be a forest of shade, over which is beginning to descend the curtain of night.

When a walk like this of fifteen or twenty acres is explored at the dawn of day,

day, or at the close of the evening beams, which are observed to pierce the entrance of the glooms, it cannot fail to strike the contemplative man with reflection and with awe. Whenever he turns himself round, he observes the embowering canopy stretching forth its dark recesses; he seems to wander through the walks of nature improved by art; nor does he farther regard the blushing sun, now setting at a distance, and gilding the avenue in which he ruminates, than as an object that appears to take with regret a last farewell of silence and of shade.

The wild plantain is a pleasing ornament of the mountain roads; and it resembles in colour and in growth the other species, with this difference only, that it is always barren.

Sometimes as the traveller winds his way between lofty and umbrageous hills, he beholds on one side of the narrow path a deep declivity which runs shelving down

Down to a bottom rudely sown with bushes and with stones; and as the latter create and continue moisture, the vegetables in such situations are observed to grow and spread with peculiar verdure and luxuriancy.

In such spots the plants above described are seen in a peculiar manner to flourish, and to please; and as they thrive most in groups, and by their approximation and the singular expansion of their leaves not only collect and imbibe, but treasure up the showers that fall, or the dews that at night descend, they seem, although self-planted, to bid defiance to tempests and to age, and to promise themselves an eternal succession of plants from the same parental root.

This picturesque production is often seen to grow by the side of a road, at the foot of a large and craggy rock, and adjoining perhaps to a mountain torrent, which, swelled by the rains and auxiliary rills, works on its sounding course, and either overflows, undermines, or deracinates the

different plants that lately grew upon its banks (when it only murmured as a silver rill, and washed the polished stones and golden sands with its refreshing waters), and hurries them on, until they are eternally lost in the imbibing sea.

In roads like these it is by no means uncommon to see immense trees, that have been dislodged by the tempest, not only block up the path, but bridge the torrent; and from which it is hardly possible to look down without giddiness and dread upon the depths below.

In situations such as these many awful and sublime studies might be made by an artist of a bold and romantic turn of mind, resembling that of Reubens, or Salvator Rosa.

A narrow road, through which with difficulty a cart can pass, and this worn out by the traverses of wheels, and the persevering industry of man, at the bottom  
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of an immense and overhanging mountain, fringed with shrubs; and most magnificently skirted with trees; which raise their gigantic stems from the romantic fissures of the disrupted rock, and seem to spurn the angry torrent underneath; and to bid defiance to the blast; that receive the deluge upon their summits, the lightning upon their branches; nor heed the reverberative thunder-peals that growl around; are images that are often observed in these retreats.

When the storm subsides, and nature makes a pause; the pearly showers are shaken from their leaves, the sun-beam gives its warmth; and they now erect their heads again, the quiet and imperial monarchs of the forest round.

On one side of the road is a bold declivity; or a tremendous precipice; which looks down to the abyss of silence and of night; and beyond which is a region of rocks, which form themselves into ca-

verns, castles, promontories, cliffs, and towers, with here and there a knot of trees that seem to struggle for a passage through the stony crevices, or rampant shrubs that wind across the tinted surface; and show like ivy that festoons the arches of the time-worn aqueduct, or the more solemn ornaments of cathedral shades. The sun just peeps upon the awful masses, and with a spreading light irradiates the glooms ; and then, as if retiring to observe the effect, and to hang with pleasure upon the magnificent scenery below, he climbs the farthest heaven, and seems for a time stationary in his vertic height, and spreads his cheerful influence over the mountains and the plains.

Over some of these gigantic fragments, and still obvious to the astonished eye, there tumbles down a full cascade, the thunders of which astound the ear, and seem to shake the landscape round. The weight of waters forms a gulph below, and retreating downwards, or ascending into

into spray, appears to be in continual tumult, wrath, and motion.

Over many parts of the torrent that is occasioned by this accumulated influx of waters, are observed immense and fallen trees, over which the safe-footed goats are seen to frolic without fear, nor dread the giddy chasm that yawns beneath. Sometimes they browze in the vallies, or bound from rock to rock, and hang in giddy pendence upon the edge of a precipice, as if they took delight in looking down upon the awful glooms below.

At a narrow part of the road is seen a loaded wain that has been crushed to pieces by the massy fragment of a descending rock ; the fable drivers stand in mute astonishment at the dreadful accident, and hardly seem to know if they themselves have yet escaped the danger. A few straggling negroes, that by chance are passing by, are likewise arrested at

the observation of the mischief; nor do they for a time offer their unavailing service. As night draws on, their impatience, as their exertions, is increased; and the splendours of the day are now withdrawn, that the moon with chaste and solemn light may pierce the glooms, and add, with dews and silence in her train, to the impressive horrors of the midnight hour.

The inoffensive and suffering cattle are with difficulty let loose to browze, while their melancholy conductors illum a fire, and sit in mournful watchfulness bewailing their apprehended fate, nor cheat the lagging night with one assuasive slumber.

Into such a landscape the lover of the grand and terrible may introduce a party of banditti, who disturb the melancholy silence of the scene, and, bent upon plunder and injured to blood, drive away the oxen, and put their unresisting attendants to death.

To scenes of horror the retired mountains in Jamaica are particularly adapted; as are, on the contrary, the lowlands and the plains, especially productive of pleasing tranquillity and rural delight.

The farms, or pens as they are denominated, are replete with pastoral imagery; and the appearance of immense droves of horned cattle, that expatiate at large over the unbounded pasture, or that are seen to browze in the different inclosures, which are surrounded by the prickly penguin, or the logwood fences, afford a pleasing spectacle to him who has not been used to behold the carpet of nature thus giving the means of labour to the industrious, and wholesome provision to the wealthy.

Upon one range of land is observed an immense quantity of horses, and of mules, from the foal at the side of its dam, to the colt that is impatient of the bit; or the mule that is soon to feel the trammels of the mill, or the pinchings of the crook,

but which now are seen to frolic and to bound over the resounding sod, to dash through the stagnant pond, to scour across the dusty road, and at last to bury themselves amidst the cooling shadows of the forest.

Over another region are seen to wander the heat-enduring sheep ; and gathered together into a social flock, they nibble thus collectively the level lawn, which hardly seems to afford them a scanty bite, but upon which they produce their fertile burthens twice a year, and load the wholesome banquet with their flesh, which is of a very particular and delicate taste. Of their hair indeed no use is made ; for even English sheep degenerate, and lose their wool in a short period of time in that intemperate climate ; and yet it is remarked that the Creole flocks will not thrive upon the mountains, where the dews are frequent, and the air is chill, in any comparison of advantage with those that are bred and fostered upon the plains.

Of

Of their coats a kind of camblet might certainly be made ; but, as the subordinate ideas of comfort and of use are sacrificed in Jamaica to the manufactory of sugar and of rum, it will take some time before any reformation can be made in the operations, or the customs, of the country.

The pen-keepers in Jamaica are generally found to be, if not the most opulent, at least the most independent, of those who cultivate the soil. Their capitals indeed are not so large as those possessed of sugar-plantations ; but then their risks are few, and their losses, except in buildings and provision-grounds, in consequence of storms, are very trifling.

The proprietor who lives upon his pen has almost all the material necessaries, and many of the subordinate comforts of life immediately within his reach ; and I do not believe that there are many people in any country, of the same rank and capital, that either do, or can afford to enter-

entertain with more abundance and hospitality.

Their herds will supply them with beef and veal; both of which, if the pasture be good, and they are allowed a sufficient time to fatten, would not be at all inferior, if the meat in that climate could have the advantage of keeping, to the same provisions in England. And I cannot help remarking in this place, that I have seen as fine cattle in Jamaica as I have ever beheld in any country; and it seems likewise extraordinary, that the breeding and the young stock are in general in very high condition, although they are raised upon pastures the feeding of which is so very short that a stranger would hardly think they could afford the least bite whatever: but then the sod is exceedingly thick, the grass of a nutritive quality, and the vegetation rapid.

Upon some pens there are from two to three thousand horned and other cattle; and

and of the former species there are many of considerable size, insomuch that it is not uncommon to see an ox at the slaughter-house that shall exceed twelve hundred weight. The price of working steers is from twelve to twenty pounds currency, but sometimes more, and sometimes less; and that of mules, from twenty-five to thirty-five per head currency: and when a pen can make such large returns, it is more economically productive than a sugar-estate.

The pen-keeper kills his own mutton and pork, both of which are decidedly superior to the flesh of sheep and hogs in England. The flavour of the first is mild, and pleasant; and that of the last is equally good throughout the year.

He raises his own poultry of every kind: he has fish, land-turtle, and crabs, in abundance; and every species of wild-fowl, at particular seasons of the year, in profusion. He has wild-boars and pigeons from the mountains; and fruit; without the neces-

sity of purchase, or the pains of cultivation. Sugar indeed he must buy, as likewise rum, if he have not, as many have, a plantation; and as for other liquors, and the more refined luxuries of life, with them his means, his savings and economy, may easily supply him. A man of this description is the one in Jamaica who is the most independent, and consequently the most happy.

The pens on the mountains, and those upon less lofty elevations, very widely differ, in prospect and appearance, from those in the plains. Upon the former, the grass is oftentimes long and nash; and they are often subject to a dreadful inconvenience, the want of water; and when the drought shall be excessive, and the cattle are consequently obliged to be driven to some river at a considerable distance, the mortality is oftentimes excessive; but as it is but seldom that, in such situations, the seasons are for a long time withheld, a misfortune of this kind can only be considered

considered as an uncommon calamity, and as one that is not to be compared to the hurricane that devasts and sweeps away the productions of a sugar-plantation.

Upon mountain-land the Guinea-grass is cultivated in preference to that which is flat : it is generally planted in the spring, and at the distance of six or eight feet ; it grows considerably through the rainy season, and in October and November it blossoms. The cattle are then turned into it, to eat it down : they shake out the feed ; the stalks become dry, and are then cut : the stubble is consumed by fire, from the vegetative properties of which the young grass springs up, and in a short time becomes one entire carpet, the verdure of which has a very brilliant, and a pleasing appearance.

A piece of Guinea-grass in the month of November, when observed either upon the mountains, more gentle elevations, or even upon flat land, affords a variety of interesting

interesting scenes, and which are varied according to situation, time, and growth:

In a young state, when it begins to cover the ground, the colour of the grass is particularly brilliant; and when the drops of dew hang trembling upon their pensile leaves, or the silken threads of the cob-webs are spread over the verdant surface; or when, broken by the brushing tread of some straggling heifer that has found its way into the inclosure, they float, like gossamer, through the air, the lover of nature cannot help observing with delight these incidental changes which chance so frequently occasions.

This production, I think, appears to most advantage when it is in the state I have just described, and interests more; as adding beauty to a picture, when it is seen cultivated upon gently-swelling hills, which insensibly lose their depressions upon the plains.

When a piece of this description is dotted over by straggling trees, or clumped in particular situations by the bastard cedars, which are singular ornaments of the Jamaica farms, or is darkened by the shadows which are spread by the deep and spiced leaves of the pimento, it is hardly possible to conceive any natural scenery more rich and beautiful ; and if there be cattle or sheep observed, or cropping the herbage, or recumbent in the glooms, these living objects of rural profit and delight cannot help giving a double interest to the surrounding scenery.

Upon some pens there is but little water for the use of the cattle, excepting such as is confined in ponds, and the resources of which are often precarious ; but yet I have heard it remarked, and I rather think with seeming justice, that they fatten more kindly where they drink of what is stagnant and muddy, than of that which is flowing and pellucid.

Of

Of those that are abundant in water, I shall select, out of a number that are blessed with this advantage, the local beauties of a particular one; and I should hope that the description will not be unpleasing to those who may not have had opportunities of exploring Nature in her most splendid scenes, and in her awful and sequestered glooms.

I suppose myself to be standing upon a given eminence, and casting my enraptured sight upon the views around.

On one side I look down from a verdant height upon a level and a beauteous lawn, in which a bubbling spring, as clear and polished as the watery brilliant, breaks out in fretful murmurs from a gravelly hill, and winds a slow irriguous channel to the neighbouring river, which surrounds this lovely plain; and with a broad, expansive sweep, incloses it in three parts round, and then flows on, triumphant in its course,

and

and with a full and meandering bed of waters divides opposing hills, and visits islands, rocks, and arches, in its course.

It is pleasant to hear the waters, when with impetuous rush they roar upon the stony basements, which, when the floods have subsided, appear to form a bridge, over which the patient herds and the timid flocks may safely pass in quest of a forbidden pasture; and no less entertaining to observe where the projection of land appears to have scooped out a tranquil bay, in which the current of the river is restrained, and in which are seen innumerable shoals of fishes of various species and dimensions, which dart along the stream, or hang in quiet indolence upon the transparent surface.

It now forsakes the deepened holes, and softly gurgling over stones and pebbles, appears to leave a pavement underneath, over which a traveller, when the floods have

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subsided, may pass with safety: on one side of which an immense cotton-tree throws out its overshadowing branches, as if in friendly salutation of the enormous fig-tree that rises indignant over the running stream, and guards the opposite passage of the waters, and disdains to join its shade with that of its gigantic rival. A steep and narrow path, adorned with plantain-trees on either side, conducts to the fording-place of the river; and the silver lapse seems to glide gently away, and to invite, with pleasing murmur, the weary traveller and his fainting steed to taste the cooling beverage as it flows along, and smooths a passage for their safe conduct and convenience.

Here is seen, where a verdant island divides the current, a solitary angler endeavouring to entrap the mullet; and there, underneath the spreading arches of the mahoe, or fiddle-wood, the fishermen are casting the net, or drawing the seine,  
and

and where the harpooner at night arrests  
the incautious prey.

As the eye wanders farther on, and is satiated with the different charms of the more contiguous prospect, it beholds the silver current shine between the branches of the trees, over which the fantastic rock has thrown an imaginary bridge; and behind which, as if to cover it with grandeur and protect it from the winds, an immense mountain is seen to rise, and dart its summit into the vapoury clouds; and upon the side of which, and seated, as it were, upon a saddle of one of the minor elevations, a solitary mansion, with a surrounding plantation of bearing trees and useful shrubs, distinguishes the abode of silence and tranquillity.

The view of the river is now intercepted by hanging hills, embrowned by shade, and through which the verdant blades of the Guinea-grass appear every now and then to catch the sun; and there the transparent

waters would prattle over the pebbly bottoms, or with a melancholy murmur wash the sands; would hang suspended in the darkened pool, or rush in torrents to the arching rocks, unnoticed and unseen, did not curiosity with a hasty tread forsake the eminence to reach the plain, and scrambling through the briars and the weeds, again behold its limpid course, and hang with delight upon the different bends which the constraining banks occasion.

Here is observed, through the opening foliage of two gigantic trees, a rock of a considerable breadth and height, and particularly romantic from the broad expansion of its shades. Some parts of this tremendous mass are rough and craggy, and some have surfaces as smooth as if the hand of art had chiseled down their white asperities.

Some portions of this seeming quarry are stained with the most soft and varied tints,

tints, and some appear as white and polished as the Parian marble, through which the azure veins are seen meandering, until they become so much attenuated as to escape at last the enraptured sight.

The light is seen upon some parts to occasion tremulous and quick reflections; and now the shadows seem to melt into the crevices, out of which a variety of creeping shrubs untwine their netted filaments, decayed by time; or, nourished in a more genial bed of vegetation, expand their little fibres far and wide, and, like the polypus, put forth their pliant fingers to attach themselves to every little excrescence that happens to project around.

The tufted weeds hang pendent from the summit; the forest-trees branch over head; and the still pellucid stream receives and returns the different images above described, and seems to engulf the surrounding scenery in its unfathomable depths below.

These views were on the side and at the back of the eminence upon which the house was seated. To the right, the prospect was of a different cast. A projecting hill confined the sight, which likewise caught a reach of the same romantic river, over which, as an image of picturesque variety, a wooden gutter conveyed a stream of water from the mountains to the distant mill, which, with the works, the plantation-buildings, the negro-houses, and an immense plain, upon which were planted twelve hundred acres of canes, and these bounded by an apparent town below, and covered and surrounded by lofty mountains above, shut in the varieties of art and nature in the front.

These views, as beautiful as the eye can see, or the imagination form, were the frequent consolers of my sick and melancholy hours, and still convey impressions which once had charms to please, but which it would be now a comfort to forget; for this property belonged to a relation

relation and a friend: but, alas! the hand of death has broken the connexion, and I can only lament the untimely dissolution!

There is still a kind of pleasing melancholy in brooding over the remembrance of former confidence, in tracing to the source the stream of friendship, and in finding it unpolluted by the faithless current of worldly interest, or domestic jars.

Many have been the hours that I have hung with complacency and pleasure upon these scenes! have observed the fogs arise from the river, and aspire like smoak between the branches of the trees, while the mind endeavoured to dispel the melancholy thought, by reflecting with rapture upon the awful images around.

How delightful is it, when the soul appears to be detached from the body, and the cogitative powers are awake, to contemplate the sublime and the obvious wonders of creation in her more splendid

as well as humble ornaments; and these have a particular, as a solemn impression upon the mind at night.

If our thoughts dare not reach to the investigation of the heavenly bodies, and follow the transcendent genius of the immortal Newton among the planets and the stars; yet has Nature given to the most humble abilities, a power to trace, and to behold, with pleasure and with gratitude, her rural charms.

The comforts of melancholy are never so delightfully enhanced as when the eye observes with silent rapture the trembling moon-beams dance upon the waters, or when the ear is mournfully amused by the soft and plaintive murmurs of the passing stream, which, as its lapse is hastened or impeded, affects the auditory nerve with different impressions.

The current is at one time so peculiarly gentle, that it is with difficulty heard to whisper

whisper upon the sands; but should a heavy rain in the mountains, and the rapid torrents, conjoin their influence to awaken its course, the turbid increase is heard at a distance, and pouring on its accumulated rush of waters, to gain upon the ear, and to deafen at last with its indignant roar: and these variations of river appearance I have often had the romantic pleasure to hear and to observe.

There is something highly pleasing in beholding, from any given situation, the plantation-buildings by night, when the moon shines splendid in her elevation, and there is not any thing to obscure the brightness of her rays, except every now and then a flitting cloud, whose silver edges, opposed to the shadowy vapour behind, give a double interest to the enthusiasm of the observer, and an additional charm to the objects around.

The eye cannot help tracing the moving picture about the works. The wains and

mules depositing their burthens at the mill; the dun appearance of the negroes that carry in the canes, or pass backwards and forwards with the trash, and the lights of whose pipes appear like jack-a-lanterns obscured by mist; the fires that alternately brighten or subside in the stoke-hole shed; and the columns of flame and smoke that occasionally aspire through the chimn'ies, and which are at a distance reflected in the river, or illume the stream that runs hurrying from the mill; are objects that cannot fail to interest, as well as please.

The water-wheel is distinctly heard to continue its drowsy rotation; the feeders of the mill attune their voices; the boilers call aloud for fuel; and too often, to awaken sentiment and disgrace these sounds, the driver's whip is heard to thunder near the buildings, and the shrieks of pain to pierce the ear, and drive compassion to the heart.

The

The settlements in Jamaica, inferior to the sugar-plantation and the pen, are so numerous, that it will be difficult to give them any other than a general description.

The provision-grounds in the mountains, or polinks as they are called in the Island, admit not of much picturesque variety. Upon these are cultivated, and particularly upon those in Liguanea (a fertile tract of ground in the neighbourhood of Kingston), all kinds of fruit and garden-stuff, or coffee, coco, ginger, and other minor productions of the country.

Some of these little settlements, being situated upon the sides or brows of the most lofty hills, look down upon prospects of immense extent and value: some, indeed, can command almost entirely the circuit of a parish; and others will take in, perhaps, a portion of a county: and of these bird's-eye views I shall have a better opportunity to speak hereafter.

The

The highland parts of Jamaica are particularly abundant in all kinds of timber, of which the soft as well as the harder species can be often applied to use and profit; but the grain of the last is hardly to be exceeded in closeness and durability by the woods of any region upon earth.

It is needless to describe the general or the individual property of any of the different sorts: it is sufficient in this place to observe, that they fully answer the wants of the country, without, I believe, but one exception; and it is certainly much to be lamented that no timber has been yet discovered of a proper texture, and a sufficient abundance, to answer the purpose of the white-oak stave, of which the rum-punchons are always constructed. Some partial experiments have been made of other woods; but prejudice has so much operated against their use, or experience condemned their manufacture, that this species of speculation is now, I believe, almost, if not entirely abandoned.

The

The American war, and the consequent privation of a liberal supply of provisions and stores from that country, have pointed out many resources in both the mountains and the plains of Jamaica; but which the subsequent peace has made of little avail, as the labour in getting planks, boards, or building-timber, would be ultimately attended with more real expence, as well as trouble, than the purchase, however precarious, of these different articles would be at the barguadier. The staves and the heading for the hogsheads should however be excepted, as they ought to be annually split upon the plantation: upon which likewise the cog-wood for the mills, the plank for the coolers, and the timber for the low-wine butts, should be likewise procured.

The subordinate trees and shrubs peculiar to the climate, more properly belong to the province of the botanist, than to the description of either the general or partial landscapes of nature; although many of them,

them, particularly the fruit-trees, such as the coco-nut, the palm, the orange, the rose-apple, the papa, the plantain, and the banana trees; or those of less useful species, the bamboo, the anotto, the bean tree, and other productions of this description and growth; and last of all, the shrubs of various size, appearance, and beauty (and among this tribe, the coffee has the decided pre-eminence); and to close the list, those plants that creep upon espaliers, and form themselves into bowers and shady walks, such as the chota, the grenadilla, and the jessamine, have, one or all, some distinct or general interest in the rural scenery.

Before I entirely relinquish the subject of a sugar-plantation, I must observe that since the introduction and general use of the plough, the landscapes of the country have received a new turn; and while the negroes are at work in planting canes upon one given portion of land, the former

is employed in digging furrows, or cane-holes, upon another.

No object adds more real interest to the charms of landscape, than the rural appearance of this machine; that while it gives variety to Nature, yet Nature in its use does not seem to be in the trammels of Art; so intimately do they associate, and so happily do they accord!

Of the use of the plough, much may be said of the profit, and much denied: it saves labour in some respects, and in others it augments it. Where it is not persevered in, the negroes must be necessarily obliged to stock-up, or clear the surface of the soil, that the fatigue of digging cane-holes may be in some measure diminished; and if the sods be tough, and the weeds heavy, it is an operation that is attended with delay and trouble.

If the plough be used so soon as a given portion of land shall have been manured, there

there cannot be any obstruction to its work from the grass or weeds; for the cattle in the pens will keep down both, and prevent their future vegetation.

So soon as the land shall be sufficiently invigorated, the surface ought to be immediately turned in; upon the hills by hoe-ploughing, and by the plough upon the plains. It is of consequence likewise that the pieces be planted as soon as possible after they are hoed, that the canes may have all the advantage of manure before the salts shall be exhaled by the arduous of the sun, and that the plants may be inhumed before the weeds shall have got a-head, which they will otherwise soon do, in consequence of a forced and a rapid vegetation.

That the land will not require so much cleaning after it shall have been turned up by the plough, as it was used to do in the ordinary mode of cultivation, cannot, I think, admit of a shadow of doubt: it is a saying, in

in some instances, of prodigious labour to the negroes, and in a great measure eradicates, or keeps down, that spontaneous growth of weeds which have an almost immediate vegetation after the rains in Jamaica: it helps to enrich, by the additional number of cattle that it requires, a barren, and it helps to loosen a stiff soil: it renders the juice of the cane more succulent and rich; and gives the produce a better grain and colour than it is thought to possess in the ordinary modes of cultivation. Whether or no the quantity be enhanced, since it has been so generally introduced, I will not venture to determine; but that it might be made to answer better than it at present does, cannot, I think, be easily denied.

There is but little land in the Island, that is cultivated with the sugar-cane, particularly upon those estates that have been long settled, that does not require manure; and the common methods that are adopted, as I before observed, to render

it fertile, are found to consist in moving pens, or dropping dung.

Upon hilly estates, the manure is carried by mules to the sides and bottoms of the hills; and it is singular to observe, however seemingly tedious may be the process, with what expedition a given number of acres will be dispatched.

Upon gentle elevations, and upon flat land, the practice of penning over the cattle is universally, and upon all soils, and in all seasons, without any variation, adopted.

There is not a country in the world in which there is more room for agricultural improvement, than in the one which I am endeavouring to describe; but then the natural indolence of the inhabitants must be removed, their industry awakened; and a slow and progressive trial of experiments must be made, under the eye of patience and observation, before they can succeed.

The

The land in Jamaica rather wants culture than richness; nor is the idea, and consequently the practice of keeping it in heart, at all understood. Cultivation is not known as a science, but as a routine of duty: and hence the doctrine of manure, and the use of the plough, are only considered as operations of annual recurrence, and not as objects that may either injure or improve; for, if the land upon which the *canes* are planted be too much invigorated, *they* will be too luxuriant to yield returns; whereas if poor land, on the contrary, be well cultivated, the produce will not only be good, but may be great.

The less the land is turned-up in Jamaica, and exposed to the burning powers of the sun, the longer will it preserve its humidity, and consequently retain its strength. In the most *humble* productions of the country, it is observable that *they* thrive best in those soils which are the most abundant in flint stones; and if

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they be heaped around a coffee-bush, or what may be called a domestic shrub, they will certainly maintain, if not increase the vegetation.

How far this idea may be held good in English farming, I will not take upon me to determine, as the means of fertility generally lie beneath the surface; whereas in the Island above mentioned, neither clay, marl, nor compost, are used in the ordinary modes of cultivation, although it might be reasonably supposed that an artificial soil would be more steadily productive than the natural one which makes the produce run up into ineffectual luxuriance.

A stratum that is made by patient and discerning industry, will keep the staple much longer in heart than the invariable practice of folding-over the land can do (where manure is necessary), without any discrimination of mould, of situation, or of climate.

The

The science of farming, I am led, from partial experience, to believe, is very little understood in the colonies; for where the extreme poverty of the soil, in one instance, requires experimental culture to make it produce; so does the richness of spontaneous vegetation, on the other, by giving before it is required, relax the more stubborn, and make abortive the hand of toil.

These observations may not be thought applicable to the present subject; but as the land in the West-Indies is cultivated by *negroes*, whatever can sustain the crops, without an exposure of the bosom of the earth, will consequently contribute to a diminution of *their* labour, and may possibly hereafter add, if properly attended to, one scruple to the scale of that humanity which is at present balanced, but which, it is to be hoped, will very soon sink, and continue loaded in *their* favour.

The plough is now partially, and I should hope profitably, used upon all plantations in the Island, where the nature of the land will admit of its introduction: upon some it works in a more general manner than upon others; and if it be found prudent to adopt it, it must be of course imprudent to relinquish it. I have seen it go upon some of the highest, I will not say the steepest, hills in Westmoreland; and it is often used upon situations of the same description in other parts of the country; but it must still be considered, that although it may be a saving of labour in some respects, and is certainly a relief to the negroes in the more heavy operations of the field,—yet does it increase their exertions in other instances.

In proportion to the extent of its use, must be the quantity of cattle kept to work it; and in proportion to the quantity of cattle will be the number of acres of land manured, and planted: and this land

land the negroes must put in; nor would the introduction of any machine, were it possible to contrive one, that would better answer the purpose, be either a saving (as this operation is not attended with much fatigue) of labour, of time, or expence. The proportion of canes being thus increased, and the absolute necessity there is that the negroes must cut them, an augmentation of labour will therefore, in this instance, attend the use of the plough: and this (next to the digging of cane-holes, as the cutters must continually stoop or rise), is tedious, unremitting, and severe; nor can any mechanic power give relief to, or assist, this manual operation.

The canes, when cut, must be tied up ; the mules and the wains must be loaded and unloaded ; they must be carried to the mill ; they must be conveyed into the mill-house ; they must be expressed ; they must be boiled, and their liquor pass through a regular process in the curing-

house and the still-house; the trash must be afterwards spread to dry; it must be housed; and all these different operations must be performed by negro labour.

If no more canes shall be planted, in consequence of the introduction of the plough, than were formerly used to be put in by the ordinary modes of cultivation, it will then certainly be acknowledged to have given great ease to the exertions of the slaves: but even then, I much doubt whether or no it will be the absolute means of an increase of population. This reform, so congenial with humanity as well as interest, must eventually, let what will be said upon the subject, or whatever speculations it may admit of, depend upon the tenderness and indulgence of the white people, under whose government they may chance to fall.

- That the plough succeeds better upon some land than it does upon others, it will

would be in vain to substantiate, as no position can be more just; but whether its use be equally profitable upon all soils, will likewise admit of a doubt.

The land in Jamaica may be thought to be upon some pieces too loose, and upon others too stiff and adhesive: the plough may therefore succeed better upon the last, than it may be found to do upon the first.

Where the land is light and even, it may be holed without having been previously ploughed; but where of a contrary nature, the clods should be left to pulverize, or the soil be turned up a second time; and if it were even left some time in fallow, it might still turn out to more advantage.

Whether the canes yield more *per acre*, upon land that has been ploughed, or upon that which has been cultivated according to the old practice, and only holed, I believe that it will be very difficult to determine;

determine; as it will likewise be, to ascertain which method of manuring answers best—that of flying pens, or dropping dung into the holes:

Upon the hills I prefer the latter, as I should likewise upon the plains, were it not attended with delay and trouble; for upon flat land I have known three or four different kinds of soil in one piece; and to invigorate all equally alike, to over-enrich the already luxuriant, or not to give sufficient vigour to the weak and barren, are solecisms in husbandry which will with certainty defeat the ends of cultivation.

In ploughing the hills there is labour and loss of time; more, I think, than would be found in the operations of the hoe: and the cattle are great sufferers by this practice.

Since this instrument has been introduced, the crops are acknowledged to be much later begun, and longer continued, than

than they were used to be; and this is owing perhaps to their supposed facility of labour, by which a larger plant, and with more ease, may be accomplished.

In former years, it is notorious, that the generality of estates began to put the mills about soon after Christmas, and all the canes were taken off in the month of April; but now those very estates do not commence the operations of sugar-making before the latter end of January, or the beginning of the ensuing month; and carry on the labours of the boiling-house, through rain, vexation, and loss, to the end of June, and some properties even until July and August,

I do not think that the land, when ploughed, is suffered to remain a sufficient time in fallow: indeed, where a large plant is to be put in, it cannot have time to moulder; and for this, and other reasons, I would rather have a diminution of acres well cultivated, manured, and planted

determine; as it will likewise, with care, tain which method of ambers that must, best—that of flying on, be slightly and dung into the hole.

Upon the <sup>real</sup> value of manure, and the should like turning cattle, in this instance, not after <sup>the account of</sup> turning cattle, upon <sup>the account of</sup>, too many of the overseers in differ <sup>manners</sup> are undoubtedly ignorant. They ir follow the common practice in every thing they do; and so far indeed they may be generally right, as experiment will occasion trouble, if not expence, and in too many instances will be attended with both.

A farmer in England will be surprised to hear, that from three hundred head of cattle, not more than sixty or seventy acres of land, upon some estates, will in the course of a year be manured; and this too but very slightly, compared to the invigoration that is given to that in England.

The practice of folding over cattle at all times of the year, and upon all soils, is highly prejudicial to the first, and often hurtful

the last ; for in the rainy seasons  
ishting how much live stock,  
calves, if penned upon the  
lost by this practice : and I  
here give my opinion, although I  
never it will be generally scouted, that  
one half of this proportion of cattle, if  
properly foddered in small inclosures, and  
these inclosures shall be well attended, and  
constantly supplied with trash, and the  
admixture of rich soils and composts, as is  
the practice in other countries—it is my  
private opinion, I say, that an hundred and  
fifty head of cattle, if thus treated, would  
yield more manure, and that of a more  
prolific quality, than *double* the number,  
according to the present practice in Ja-  
maica.

There are many, I know, who will call  
out against trouble : but what is trouble  
compared to expence ? The saving of cat-  
tle, in the course of a few years, would  
enable the planter to purchase a sufficiency  
of negroes to answer every purpose that  
may

may be required from this reformation ; and while he contributes to the enrichment of his land, he is making likewise an annual addition to his capital ; for it is solely upon the preservation, or augmentation, of this, that the planter can either consider himself as independent or affluent.

Upon an estate which has two hundred negroes, and about the same number of cattle, I do not think it would be proper to put in, one year with another, more than sixty, or at most seventy acres of plants : and I should prefer its being completed in the month of November at the very farthest, as the seasons are seldom favourable beyond that period. Upon old land I do not think that a spring plant ever answers : it interferes with the crop, it occasions additional labour to the steers and mules at the very time that they require rest, after the continual fatigues of the harvest : and, besides, the time that must necessarily be given to this operation, would be better employed in cleaning and supplying the young

young canes, and in planting provisions and grafts.

An estate that cuts sixty acres of plant-canies for sugar, with the same proportion of first and second ratoons, ought to make, with tolerable seasons, about one hundred and fifty hogsheads upon an average, and from eighty to ninety puncheons of rum. The stores from England for such a property ought not to exceed two hundred pounds, nor the provisions from Ireland one hundred : and of herrings I would recommend thirty barrels for every hundred negroes ; and this would be not only an ample, but a generous, supply.

If the land be stiff (and a great portion of it in Westmoreland is of this description), I do not think that a negro will plough more, one day with another throughout the season, than a quarter of an acre, all interruptions of rain and accidents allowed. If, therefore, the crop be not finished before the months of June and July, it may easily be

be imagined with what carelessness and haste a plant of seventy acres must be completed.

Where two or three ploughs are set in, particularly upon light and level land, a great deal may be done in a short time : and indeed, when the same power is given to that of a different texture, the expedition of the plant will be consequently accelerated,

The use of the plough is not certainly arrived at its period of perfection in Jamaica : it is, without doubt, capable of much improvement to the land, with a proportionate diminution of negro labour : and, as the breed of cattle shall be more and more attended to, and an additional quantity raised, its operations will become, if possible, more general ; and it may be a mean of introducing a different mode of cultivation, a different system of manure, and may help to turn out riches from the land which prejudice to old customs, or an ignorance

Ignorance of agricultural science may have suffered to lie long buried and unexplored.

As an object in landscape, much may be said in its rural praise ; for of its particular consequence, when taken in this view, every admirer of nature must have seen its variety, and will acknowledge its effect.

When this useful and ornamental instrument of husbandry is observed to cut a regular furrow upon the plains, it is not unamusing to observe the variety of birds of different plumage and description that follow the sable lines which they share occasions, and which peck their living food from the bosom of the soil ; from that universal parent that gives her children sustenance, and which at last, as Pliny observes, receives them again after their dissolution into her maternal bosom ; and which is constantly giving food to the industrious, or receiving into peace the persecuted and unhappy descendants of the human race.

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P

When

When three or four of these rural implements are stretching a length of furrows upon the barren moor, or flying sands, we cannot help dwelling upon the industry and art of men, which can by dint of toil and perseverance oblige the first to yield abundance, and compel the last to turn adhesive, and to put on the face of cultivation.

When we see deserts peopled, and dreary tracts of solitude and waste become the habitations of luxury and wealth ; when the silence of nature is converted into the buzz of commerce, and from the bosom of penury and want are found to arise, not only competence, but superfluity, what a lesson does it not unfold of the benevolent intentions of Providence !

The earth is niggard of her gifts, that the hand of industry may bring them forth ; and, however discouraged we may be by the sterile appearance of the surface, yet let man reflect, that the mine is buried beyond the reach of cultivation, and that in his progress

gress to the reservoirs of gold and silver, he has passed through many strata of earth that would have been productive of the wants and the comforts of man.

When the plough is seen to work upon the side of a hill, and the negroes are hoe-ploughing those parts that are inaccessible to the labour of cattle; when the exertions, the impatience, and the hurry of the latter are contrasted with the slow and progressive motion of the former; one would naturally conclude, that the last would turn up more land in an hour than the other would complete in a day: but here there is a striking proof of the advantage of persevering though tardy labour, over the spirits of animation, and the momentary spirit of toil.

The interest which the plough affords to a Jamaica landscape, is very little different from that which the traveller will see in those parts of Europe in which oxen are used in preference to horses. The former

are more picturesque animals in general than the latter, and should not, I think, be too frequently introduced into the same landscape ; or, if introduced, I would not always have them in the same group. The horse gives a seeming spirit and a motion to the rural scene, and has therefore a particular effect as the principal figure in a storm ; whereas the oxen and the sheep, from their quiescent natures, have a different interest in the calm.

The bull, the heifer, or the steer, seem to associate uncommonly well with the ram, the ewe, the lambkin, and the goats, and the ass is likewise a great addition, and adds a pleasing variety, to the picturesque group ; as would likewise a slouching and a meagre horse help to fill up the drawing to advantage : but the mettlesome steed, or the bounding colt, would interfere with, and disturb, the quiet assemblage, and hence will do better in landscapes of animation and busines.

Where

Where horses are used in the plough, they do not make the picturesque and rural appearance that oxen do : they seem to be more formal ; nor can they indeed be brought to work, on account of the nature of the soil, in those countries that produce the greatest variety of bold and romantic views.

If they toil upon the plain, the path that is marked out for their progress is uniform and strait, and is only varied perhaps by an intersecting baulk or village-division in the champaign countries, or by hedges in those that are inclosed : but where the oxen labour, the scene is various, and the landscape different ; and the plough, instead of drawing out one length of furrow, is seen to describe a curve at the bottom of the hill ; to emerge from, or to dip into, a woody glade ; and now to move along the skirts of a hanging wood, within the hearing of the roaring torrent, or the splashings of the white cascade.

Not but it is pleasing to see it, when worked by horses, appear every now and then, and come out into the light, as it were, between the different parts of a broken fence; over which the oak, the ash, and the elm, are seen to throw their aged branches; and among the foliage of which the solitary wood-guest is heard to breathe its melancholy note, as if in sad responses to the whistling hind, that amuses himself with this vacant music, as he cuts out the furrows with a regular and persevering step below.

These latter images may be frequently observed in the flat lands of England; but the mountains in Jamaica present a very different prospect; for Nature there partakes more of the terrors of the sublime, than of the humble pleasures of quiescent scenery.

The immense herds of cattle that are constantly observed upon the plantations in this island give a particular interest to the general landscapes of the country; and  
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as these are seen to browse in different situations, and at different periods of the day, their removal from one place to another will consequently vary the rural prospect, and present forms and images continually new.

At noon they are generally conducted to shade; and this is of various kinds, according to the disposition, and the growth, of the trees by which they are distinguished.

The cotton-tree protrudes, when the sun is vertical, an immense and trembling canopy of shade; but then it is not in general so impenetrable as the logwood and the bastard cedar, which are of more humble growth, but which consequently, from their lowness, and the nearness of their masses, afford a more thick and certain umbrage.

The minor beauties of landscape, that are found in the inclosed and in the cultivated farms of England, are very different,

in every respect, from those which are to be observed, even after the most sedulous attention, in Jamaica ; the surface of the latter, where not cultivated, being over-spread with an indescribable variety of gaudy, but useless productions, which, from the rapid vegetation of the climate, grow up with wild and bushy appearances that rather load the soil than serve to adorn it.

The flowers of the wilderness, in the above-mentioned Island, are beautiful, but very few species are aromatic : there is indeed a kind of wild jessamine, that every now and then sends forth a most rich and overpowering fragancy; but the humble productions of the meads in England, such as the crocus and the daisy, the cowslip and the violet, have not their counterparts in that latitude : and even the rose does not possess the same odour and the same beauty ; nor do its leaves double in any degree of perfection compared to this lovely and modest flower in England ; a climate which in a particular manner seems

Seems to foster the diminutive productions of nature, to cover their vestments with splendour, and to fill their cups with sweets; and which affect the eye and the senses with double charms, in consequence of their appearance at particular seasons.

When winter's past with all its snows,  
And zephyrs spread the wing,  
Beneath the hedge the vi'let grows,  
The early child of spring.

Expanding to the sunny ray,  
Or foster'd in the glade,  
It gives its odours to the day,  
Its perfumes to the shade.

But oh! when winter shall return,  
And frost benumb the vale,  
Though shelter'd by protecting fern,  
No more her sweets prevail.

Whereas, in tropic climes, the flow'r  
That wastes its hues unseen,  
Droops not beneath the changeful hour,  
But boasts eternal green.

Although no essenc'd dew descends  
Upon its humble vest,  
Yet vermeil leaves, to make amends,  
In pride uninjur'd rest.

The rural objects of Nature in European climates may be observed with more convenience and safety than they can in warmer latitudes, in which curiosity may lead to danger, and exercise be followed by death.

It is indeed much to be lamented, that where Nature has poured forth her bounties with so profuse a hand, so few can be gathered in proportion to their abundance; and that some of the most beautiful and splendid of her charms are contrasted, as before observed, with difficulty and danger.

The filken cobwebs oft invite,  
With dewy pearls inlaid,  
Th' incautious insect to alight,  
By mimic gems betray'd:

But though the mesh so beauteous shine,  
The fly may poison bring;  
And those soft threads, that seem so fine,  
May yet conceal the sting.

AFTER

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AFTER the plough, an account of the nature of the soils of Jamaica may be likewise expected; but this is so extremely different, and indeed so infinite is the variety, that I shall only notice those that are commonly met with in the cultivation of the cane.

Which particular species of mould is best adapted to the propagation of this plant, it will be difficult to determine, as this will greatly depend upon situation and seasons.

In the parish of Vere there is a kind of blue mould, which I take to be as rich a soil, and of as strong a staple, as any in the Island; and that it is remarkably congenial to the perfection of the cane may be easily imagined from its excessive returns when the seasons have been favourable: but

but this part of the country is more subject to, and more often experiences drought, than any other portion of the Island.

The canes upon this land will stand a great number of cuts, without the necessity of a supply, or replantation; and the produce is as fine as the land is rich. The heat is so intense in this particular district, that a stranger can very sensibly feel, as he rides about the plantations, the reflection of it from the ground; and it is chiefly owing, I believe, to the fervour of the noon-tide rays, that all the fruits, and of the various kinds, are *there* found in the highest perfection and flavour.

As the landscape is in general flat, but, where at all elevated, is covered with the cashaw and the popinax trees, which may be almost considered as the spontaneous weeds of that region; and as the land is so often parched with drought, the river low, and the stream dry; it is but seldom indeed that

that it presents any image of picturesque beauty; and even after rains, when the torrent shall tumble from the distant mountains, and swell the bed of the stream, the consequences which it occasions in its full and turbid course, are those of danger and desolation, without putting on any of those forms that awaken terror, or (excepting that of momentary apprehension) that partake of the sublime.

The soil in the parish of Saint David is miserably poor and barren; and hence there are in it but few plantations; but the features of Nature are grand, prominent, and impressive.

In this tract of land, very few situations will admit of cultivation, the most considerable portion of it being a bed of rocks, among which are hardly seen any inhabitants but goats: but at every turn is observed some singular appearance of Nature; and, as far as retirement and silence

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can delight, this parish is not without its romantic charms.

As the traveller pursues his road through the gloomy and inhospitable shades of this stony region, he cannot fail to admire the towering rocks and the spreading trees that grow to an immense size from their gigantic clefts, and which, excluding the visitation of the sun-beams, produce the most solemn glens that the eye of contemplation can well behold; and while his sight is arrested by the picturesque solemnity of its glooms, his ear is amused by the melancholy murmur of the woods around.

What pleasure may not a reflective mind experience from tracing, in idea, the pursuits and the resources of the feathery inhabitants of the grove, when the branches are made vocal by their murmurs or their songs; when the leaves are disturbed by their pastime, or their quarrels; or when they rise in flocks, and cause a tremor upon the summits of the trees, and leave their partners,

partners, their nests, their young ones, or their eggs behind, to explore the distant vallies or the hills, or to steal from the cultivation of the fields, or the washings of the beach, their daily food, and hence divide the fruits of industry and the acquirements of duty and love, upon their return, with their nursing and expectant mates at night !

The female, fitting on her nest,  
 Observes her partner fly,  
 And with a fond, contented breast,  
 Pursues him through the sky :  
 Yet no regret attends his flight,  
 Though far his pinions roam ;  
 For they, however late at night,  
 Are sure to waft him home.  
 But now return'd, and on the spray,  
 He consolation brings,  
 Divides the product of the day,  
 Then shelters with his wings.

In retired situations like these, the goat becomes a very interesting object: picturesque in itself by nature, its habits partake of scenes that are wild and romantic; and

and as it is the principal figure in regions of sterility and danger, as it can feed upon the most coarse and neglected herbage, can frolic upon the most inaccessible elevations, and look down from the most giddy heights—it becomes a well-adapted inhabitant of stony mountains, and the trackless waste of naked rocks, and jutting promontories; and may be even regarded with attention and delight, in the more humble and quiet scenes of rural imagery.

There is something extremely reviving to the sight, and animating to the feelings, when a traveller all at once emerges from the depths of solitude and desolation, and comes out upon the plains of cultivation and abundance; when the landscape takes a new turn, and every object appears of a different hue, and is diversified by a different form; when large droves of cattle are seen browszing upon the level pastures, and the hills, by which they are skirted, are bending with canes, or the Guinea-grass,

grafts in blossom is shaking to the breeze;— when after traversing a tract of land without culture, a desert without a torrent or a spring, a full river comes pouring down from the mountains, and branched out into numerous irrigations, refreshes the thirsty, and improves the barren, soil ; and at last discharges its waters with a meandering course, and within the observer's sight, to the sandy marshes through which they percolate, or lose themselves in the deep absorbing sink-holes, from which they reluctantly flow at last, and pay their tribute to the sea.

Between the parishes of St. David, and the most eastern part of St. Thomas in the East, a great variety of country may be observed, and a considerable proportion of which will admit of many various and pleasing kinds of landscape ; the most romantic of which, in the neighbourhood of Bath, I have already attempted to describe.

This latter parish is very abundant in water; but then the rivers do not flow through so romantic a country, nor do their banks afford so many pleasing scenes as are observed in those parts which I have had more opportunities and leisure to explore.

Plantain-garden River is infinitely more useful than it will be found, particularly upon the plains, to be picturesque; but then it irrigates one of the most fertile parts of Jamaica, and enriches a tract of country, the soil of which is inexhaustible and fine.

Upon its banks are some of the best properties in the island, and perhaps some of the most valuable single farms, if I may be allowed to call a sugar plantation by this name, in the universe; and as the stretch of distance upon which these settlements are placed may be overlooked from the neighbouring heights, it may be easily supposed how much the charms of cultivation, and

and the surprise of distance, may be enhanced by a reflection of the opulence which they annually produce.

The greatest part of this land is distinguished by the appellation of brick mould, is inexhaustible in point of fertility, is of easy labour, of an even surface, and of a depth of soil almost unknown.

The seasons that refresh it are in general mild and regular, although it has, like other parts of the island, been of late years unfortunately visited by hurricanes, and is subject likewise to be sometimes overflowed.

In a country that is watered by so many rivers, it is natural to suppose that there must be a great variety of falls; and in the rainy seasons these sublime and beautiful objects are very frequently to be met with. I have beheld several, that have had their local charms; and variety and

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surprise are circumstances that give an additional interest to every scene.

How much more striking is a cataract that comes, as it were, all at once upon the eye, but which the ear had previously taught us to explore, and which is buried in a night of shade, and encompassed by torrents, rocks, and mountains—than one that is seated near a village or a town, which is obvious from the street, which gives its daily thunders unnoticed, and which is totally unadorned by verdure and by shade.

Seclusion contributes in a great degree to the sublimity of rural impressions; and hence it is that the waterfall at Terney will always strike the mind with more astonishment and grandeur than that tremendous fall at Tivoli, which is situated in the midst of population, and disgraced by the deformities of art.

There

There is something awfully sublime in beginning a journey at the dawn of day, in those romantic regions, in which mountain torrents and cascades abound ; when the eye is arrested at every turn, and the ear is interested by every sound.

When the traveller first leaves the plain, and beholds the river, that lately flowed with a quiet and a dimpling stream, begin by perceptible degrees to exchange the tranquillity of its waters, and to forego a sandy or a pebbly bottom for a channel choked up by rocks ; when his ear is kept attentive by the incessant falls that succeed each other, till at last the sounds increasing, the glooms prevailing, and expectation alive, he suddenly beholds at the last romantic turn the fronting cataract discharge its mighty stream, ingulph the fir-trees and the pines, the lofty and umbrageous products of the mountains, and shake, with its unremitting weight of waters, the dark, though capacious, amphitheatre that the rocks and woods have formed around.

The soil in many parts of St. James's is uncommonly deep, and some of the most fertile properties in the parish are adjoining to the sea; a circumstance rather uncommon, and which, as it saves the distance of carriage, is of infinite consequence, and they become of course in proportion valuable.

In the neighbourhood of Montego Bay, which is grown into a populous and commercial town, is a tract of land that is uncommonly favourable to the perfection of the cane; and one particular estate in this district is supposed, in proportion to its size, to make the most considerable and regular returns of good and even produce of any plantation in the Island; and it is really astonishing to hear how long this plant will continue to stand, and how greatly it will yield without any apparent trouble or cultivation.

In the internal parts of this division of the Island, there are many hundred acres together

together of black-mould land upon a clay, and the surface of which is entirely covered with loose and flinty stones; and this I believe to be the most durable and profitable soil, in all seasons, that is to be met with in Jamaica; as the canes upon it will run up into the most luxuriant ratoons, and they will stand to cut, and will continue to yield well, without much care or cleaning, for a considerable number of years: the flints retaining the moisture, supporting vegetation, and at the same time preventing the rapid growth of grass and weeds.

From some of the elevations upon this road, particularly from those that look down upon Montego Bay, and the richly cultivated plains around, are to be observed some very grand and extensive views.

As the traveller ascends the hills, and beholds the scenery below him, his eye is lost in the multiplicity of images, in the splendour of the objects, and in the

interminable stretch of distance, which insensibly recedes from the eye, and is at last undistinguished in the horizon.

The beach is broken by a succession of bays; and in those are dotted a number of verdant islands, which break the regular expanse of the pellucid ocean; in the bosom of which may be seen, reflected through the waves, and peering, as it were, above the surface, a various assemblage of broken rocks, adorned with coral, with leaves, and a variety of submarine productions; and which, with the neighbouring mangroves, that throw their dark reflections into the polished mirror, present a scene of uncommon lustre, and local beauty; and which assume fresh forms and new attractions as the eye descends to a level contemplation of their quiescent charms.

This view is observed to arrest the eye of every beholder: the plantations on the borders of the sea, which breaks into gentle curves—the town that appears at a distance,

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the hills that back the plains, and the mountains that swell above the hills, present the eye with a prospect of extent and sublimity: of extent, upon which the various objects may be minutely and clearly discriminated; and of sublimity that sinks from the grand into the simple, and that is elevated from the simple into the sublime.

The road from which this view is to be observed, is not deficient in picturesque beauty. In the declivity of the hill, that is darkly shaded by rocks on one side, and by massy foliage on the other, is drilled the bed of a hoarse, impetuous torrent; and which, when the waters are out, is observed to tumble in successive, though not stupendous, falls, and rushing through the adjoining ornaments of underwood and shrubs, is sometimes seen, and sometimes lost; and now the murmurs die away, and now they swell with the breeze, until at last they become unheard from distance, or silenced by the more noisy washings

washings of the beach, or the roarings of the surge.

The road of communication between the parishes of St. James and Westmoreland is not distinguished by much variety of view, or extension of distance : it rather partakes of that kind of nature that is congenial to the mind of him who is fond of contemplation, and who delights in those sequestered and quiet glooms which encourage thought, and produce the heart-giving comforts of reflection.

As far as lofty trees, and their natural consequences, expansive shades, are pleasing objects of landscape, this journey may be considered, by the traveller, as abounding in both, and to be full of these species of rural impression ; while the winding path, the rising hill, the gentle depression, the trickling stream, the hollow glen, the stony cavern, and the giddy height, have their different effects, and either soothe his thoughts by the tranquillity of their appearance, or awaken

awaken in his mind the ideas of sublimity and danger.

In some divisions of this romantic road, and to break the sameness that would otherwise disgust, the stranger's eye is alternately cheered, in a given and interfering proportion of miles, by the unexpected appearance of a plantation, which for a considerable length of way engages his attention, and breaks the long-continued uniformity of thought: he now contrasts the beauties of Nature in a state of cultivation and expence, to those silent retreats which human industry has left unexplored, to those woods unconscious of the axe, those hills untrodden by the mule, unbrowzed by oxen, and unenlivened by the goat—to those plains upon which the stones have been undisturbed, and the bosom of which no plough has broken; and according to the temper of his mind, will either prefer prospects of artificial abundance to the unavailing impressions of Nature; or forego the splendours of the funny

funny plain, with all its adornments of cultivation and expence, to bury himself among those glooms which are more congenial to the habits of thinking, and which afford to seclusion and penury an advantage over population and wealth.

The first opening that lets in the extensive and highly-cultivated plain of Westmoreland, is singularly striking, as well as pleasing ; and there are several objects of rural observation around this given spot, that, independently of the general view, and distinct from the individuality of each other, would much delight and interest the landscape painter,

I suppose a person of this description to be in a manner arrested by the alternate contemplation of the objects around him ; that he stops in the midst of the road, with his pencil in his hand, and wishes to select one confined view out of the pleasing variety by which he is surrounded. As yet the extensive prospect has not burst upon

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the sight, but appears over the intervening bushes as a line of distance, unbroken by any object, and of course undiscriminated by any prominent and leading feature.

As he turns back, and directs his view towards the mountains, he perceives a road, overshadowed on one side by lowly hills and straggling trees, and on the other a walk of plantains and bananas ; and as the eye looks forward, and pierces into the glooms, he beholds a lowly habitation and some ruined huts obscurely situated at the bottom of a winding path, which seems to rise in perpendicular ascension, and to meander through the burying woods, in which is every now and then observed a furtive sun-beam trembling amidst the shades, and showing, obvious to the sight, a group of mules that wind, under their heavy burthens, their patient and cautious way adown the hills, and come out at last in picturesque procession upon the confined plain that just appears to open below, and upon which the waggons and the wains

wains have long remained in peaceful ex-  
pectation of their useful loads.

As he turns to the left, he observes a mountain, upon which the magnificent cotton-trees expand their branching arms, and protect with their shadows, the minor products of the soil below—the plantain-tree, that rises here and there in solitary clumps—the wide-spreading leaves of the coco—and the aspiring tendrils of the yam, through which the watchman is taking his solitary rounds, and every now and then attempts to stoop, though bent by years and the infirmities of nature, to eradicate the intruding weed, or the matted grass; and who, after this feeble exertion, retires with a slow and a trembling step to his rustic hovel, from thence brings out the embers of his fire, and lays the fertile ashes at the root of his infant suckers, which when grown up to a state of maturity are to supply his future wants, and which he gathers with cheerful industry

industry as the fruits of independency, and the recompence of exertion.

Through the different vegetables that adorn these heights, is observed, in the rainy seasons, a pleasing number of petty rills, which, brawling over the pebbles and the stones with which the soil is covered, disperse themselves in various channels amidst the different tufts of vegetation, and form in particular parts, where their lucid streams are accidentally collected, a series of slowly-winding and small cascades, which, accumulating as they proceed, urge on a gentle course to the bottom of the hill, and from thence flow on in one continued rivulet to its fringed brow, from which they prattle in a hasty course adown a stony lane, on both sides surrounded by foliage and by shade, until the waters are lost in the porous and imbibing quality of the soil below.

A circular basin, as blue as indigo, and as deep as the regions of death, is observed on one side to receive the extraneous waters,

waters, and, when full, to disgorge them upon the neighbouring road, from which they are hurried down in a tumultuous progress, and over a declining precipice, to the distant and absorbing plain.

A variety of scenes thus obvious and romantic—of retirement within the reach of exposure, of rocks and mountains over-hanging precipices, of elevations sinking into plains, of terror exchanged for tranquillity, and nature enhanced by art—a variety thus discriminated, and thus beheld, there are but few regions that can substantiate ; and which, melancholy to think ! it is not in my power, who have seen them, to describe.

To the parish of Westmoreland I cannot be otherwise partial than to its rural imagery ; and as far as credit can be given to ocular observation, and allowances made for natural experience, as far as one individual may obtrude his thoughts on others, and may presume to dictate from his

his feelings what may be the impressions of others; I shall be contented to fix my criterion of natural beauty—of beauty arising from tranquillity, of magnificence proceeding from terror, of sublimity occasioned by destruction—to that unfortunate region which I have so often contemplated with pleasure, and looked upon with disgust; so often observed smiling with abundance, and blanked by desolation; so often known happy, and seen sunk to despair: in which I have known dependents converted into masters, servility exchanged for disdain, obligations returned with ingratitude, and confidence rewarded by treachery, a broken heart, and the apprehensions of an early grave.

Of its soil I shall hereafter speak, and with some confidence at least, if not with observation; but shall previously say, that the sea-side parishes, to which it is on the left and on the right contiguous, are as different in mould and appearance as any that are to be found in the island of Jamaica.

In St. Elizabeth's the land is in common too barren to produce in any perfection the sugar-cane; but then it is admirably adapted to the formation of pens, the best of which are certainly to be found in this parish, and many of which are replete with majestic scenery and quiescent beauty.

A kind of red earth prevails throughout the public roads of this particular region; and as it is only favourable to natural herbage, artificial grass, and corn and cotton; to the growth and perfection of fustic, logwood, and the various species of building-timber—these are therefore found, where cultivated, or where they arise in a neglected state, to attain a proper maturity, and to adorn the plains, and to cover the mountains, which would otherwise appear to be entirely barren.

The wild parts are extremely romantic, and present views of a very different style of

of composition from those which I have already described.

The pimento-trees are of natural production, and in some situations appear to thrive extremely well; although I am led to believe that they are not so much attended to as an article of commerce upon the flat land as they are upon the hills and mountains; and as they grow spontaneously upon particular soils, and form, when grouped together, a dark and aromatic shade, the stranger may repose under their branches with delight; but when they show the blossom, the fragrance becomes almost painfully diffuse, in so much that even at a distance, after a momentary enjoyment, it rather becomes an essence to disgust, than a fragrance to please.

In the sandy divisions of the parish, the general landscape appears to be, if I may be allowed the expression, an ornamented desert; for although the herbage be not

only short but scanty for the pasturage of cattle and of sheep, yet are there shrubs without number for the browsing of the goats, and shade and shelter for the comfort and the safety of other animals.

In wastes like these, the playful thatch and the aspiring cabbage-tree arise in pride of vegetation, and shake their leaves in rustling tremor to the concert of the winds that murmur round ; or at the first breakings of the day, when no storm impends, they shake off the dew-drops from their tufted summits, and adorn the forests with their waving plumes.

When the first zephyrs of the morn awake,  
The thatch is seen his fan-like leaves to shake ;  
And the tall cabbage bends, on sands like these,  
With rustling tremor to the passing breeze ;  
Or looks indignant from his verdant height,  
And nods his feath'ry crown to strike the fight.

There are some considerable, and one very useful river in this parish ; and which, from the appearance of its waters in particular

ticular places which are darkened by the overhanging foliage, has obtained the appellation of Black: but this property does not by any means preclude it from that transparency which is observable in other rivers of the country.

Of a confined landscape, I think one of a serene and captivating cast might be copied from a particular situation adjoining to this river, whose waters proceed with a deep and tranquil course, and which are sheltered in several places from the burning sun by trees that appear to form a canopy over head of refreshing and impervious shade,

A very picturesque, and the more so as a wooden bridge is seen from the banks to divide the current of the stream, on one side of which the prospect is umbrageous and dark, and on the right, as if delighting in the amenity of the scene, a ray of light is observed to descend from the opposite hill, and to hang upon that portion of the

waters into which the reflections of the overhanging arches are daily thrown, and upon the broken and shelving borders of which the aquatic plants shoot forth their broad umbrellas, and covered over with the matin dews, appear to glow, when irradiated by the sun-beams, like a bed of changing opals upon a block of emerald.

The exit from the wood to the simple and the spreading arch of communication above described, is faintly gilded by the morning light, which marks the legs of the cattle, and which are seen by degrees to receive a stronger lumination as they burst upon the view, and catch the rays which break in momentary reflections round,

A loaded boat is observed to glide slowly through the arch ; the herds and flocks are driven towards the banks, and descend in a winding line adown the gentle depressions of the hill, which is rough with thistles and with weeds ; and through the opening which the road occasions, the sun-beam

beam steals to irradiate the scene above described.

There is a large tract of land in this parish that is one continued morass, and which, not being deemed fit for any species of cultivation, is hardly entitled to any description ; and there is an immense extent of plains which in the rainy seasons is covered with a natural herbage upon which sheep are known to thrive and to encrease in great abundance.

The climate in one particular part of this parish is reckoned the most restorative to convalescence of any in the island ; and, from the accounts that have been uniformly given by those who have occasionally resided there as invalids, or who have resorted to that spot upon parties of pleasure, it may be imagined that the air is as elastic and as salubrious as any in the world. The heat and inconvenience of a tropical sun are there hardly distinguished ; and exercise may be taken without languor upon those

level plains (which being dotted over with innumerable clumps of different trees, have the appearance of an English park), at any hour of the day, without fatigue, or apprehension of danger.

It is over this tract of land that the eye wanders when the traveller descends May-day-hill, and the confines of which are bordered by the ocean.

In this celebrated view there is distance, but not variety in comparison to the extent. The objects immediately below the eye are too far removed to admit of minute parts, and of picturesque description. The principal lines of beauty are on the left-hand side; and these entirely consist of the Pedro plains, through which no river flows, and upon which no pond is seen: but as soon as the flat land is gained (that is, flat comparatively speaking, to the above mentioned, and in some parts almost inaccessible, heights), there are many objects of rural imagery that are singular in appearance,

pearance, and hence pleasing from their eccentricity.

Sometimes as the stranger journeys on between the more painful descent of the hill and the actual plains of St. Elizabeth, he is lost in the shadows of surrounding rocks and forest glooms; and many of the trees that produce those shadows, receive their nourishment and the means of growth in the bosom of these massy fragments; and sometimes three or four at a time are seen to struggle together from the same fissure, and interweave their branches overhead, as they unite their stems below; and of these singular appearances in every part of the island, it is hardly possible to describe the variety as well as beauty.

The scenes observable among the pens of this parish are found to vary, inasmuch as many are upon the mountain land, and many upon the plains; but those which

partake

partake of both, on account of the value and convenience of provision-grounds, and the advantage of guinea-grass, are the most esteemed.

Upon both there is a variety of landscapes; but of landscape not generally marked by such bold and prominent features, as those observed in other parts of the island: and however pleasing a good and a level road may be, which winds among an extensive tract of pasture, upon which are observed innumerable herds and flocks of cattle, and of horses, of sheep and goats, in various groups and different attitudes; yet as fatigues will follow observation, and that which appeared to be a novelty at the beginning of the journey, will begin to fatigue at its conclusion,—these pictures by degrees will lose their effect, and the imagination will look forward to other prospects, although they may be only gained by perseverance and fatigue.

That

That land which is not favourable to the cane, provisions, or the artificial grass of the country, may still be admirably well adapted to pasturage; and of this there are obvious truths in every part of the island. Such a soil indeed, although it be not by any means so valuable as that upon which an annual crop of sugar may be gathered, yet will it be found productive of cotton, and if properly invigorated will not give a scanty return of corn: but if even the most considerable part of it be fit for the cultivation of the cane, yet is not that portion of it without its value, which is destined to the support of cattle, or that, be it ever so poor, that can administer to the more humble wants of a plantation.

The parish of Hanover is generally said to be the best cultivated of any one in the island, and is certainly that which for a number of years has produced the greatest quantity of sugar. It is mountainous in many parts, and almost hilly in all, and  
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the mountains and the hills are equally planted with canes ; and such is the pre-dilection that is given to it, that a very inconsiderable portion of pasture is left for the use of the cattle, which are obliged, at the expiration of the crop (in which they have plenty of fodder), to be driven to the distant pens to recruit, or fatten. The provision-grounds are, notwithstanding, good and plentiful.

The soil that prevails most in this parish is said to be a fullers earth, which appears, before it is disturbed, to be veiny like marble ; but when worked with the hoe, it cuts like soap, and very much resembles in appearance that species of marl which is found in the high lands of Suffolk. It is particularly fertile, and the produce made from it is of an admirable quality : if the canes however be suffered to stand too long upon it, it will be apt to burn,

As far as a general appearance of cultivation can tend to the beauty of landscape,

scape, this parish claims a pre-eminent place among views of this description; and the constant succession of elevations and descent cannot fail to vary the objects of nature, and to produce a new picture at every turn.

The sea-side views adjoining to this tract of country are remarkable for the magnificence and the beauty of their forms; and the curving bay, the wooded cove, the sandy beach, the obvious ferry, the hanging hills, the dotted houses, and the distant sea, are all objects of discrimination, and cannot fail to strike with wonder and delight.

The internal prospects of the country have likewise their variety of charms; and it is pleasing, from the highest elevations to look down upon those that sink beneath the sight, and whose uneven surfaces are plainly discerned, and whose sides are by degrees observed to be lost in the plains.

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To behold for a circumference of miles the whole face of the country under cultivation, the extreme boundaries on one side shut in by mountains of inaccessible height and sublime appearance, and the confines of the other insensibly lost in the line of the horizon ; and this intermediate view divided into different plantations, upon which are observed hills rising upon hills, or losing themselves inversely, and by degrees sinking into the plains—the buildings swelling upon the heights, or half lost and sunk in the vallies—the smoke aspiring from the works, the cattle driven in herds over the winding roads that intersect the different mountains, and the groups of negroes employed in their useful avocations ; altogether exhibit a grand, a various, and a moving scene.

The soil in the parish of Westmoreland is extremely different upon different situations : upon some parts the black mould upon a clay without flint stones, and upon others covered with flints, prevails ; upon others,

others, a *red* earth or small-shot soil upon a clay or loom; the *former* of which, if it be well manured, and the seasons shall happen to be favourable, will sometimes yield extremely well; but the latter, be the weather ever so favourable, will yield but little, and that little will perhaps be bad.

The brick-mould land in this parish, though highly vaunted and highly valued, does not in general answer, particularly if it be by the side of rivers, in any expected proportion of sugar to what many other soils are known to do. The canes are luxuriant, and are apt, and very early in the year, to fall down; and will consequently succeed much better for plants than sugar. This species of earth is rich, but loose; and what is planted in it will stand a long time without decay, and the staple is not easily impoverished. It throws up every vegetable substance with celerity and vigour, and is well adapted to the plantain-tree, which is however, from the little adhesion

adhesion of the mould, very apt to be lodged with the least wind, and to be deracinated by the smallest flood.

Some of the small-shot land is hardly better for canes than a *caput mortuum*; but then it will produce, in the seasons, a tolerable crop of corn, and at all times good pasture, provided the weather shall not be uncommonly dry.

The marly lands are exceedingly capricious in their produce, and in plants the return of sugar is in general very moderate; but if there be a good clay underneath, and proper care be annually taken of the young shoots, they will continue to stand a succession of cuts, and will yield better in an old ratoon than if the pieces were put in afresh. This soil is, I think, more subject to the blast than any other; and the sugar manufactured from it, except it be in seasons particularly favourable, is of a very indifferent complexion  
and

and grain. It produces excellent corn and grass, and some of the inferior kinds of provisions.

Some parts of the pieces in this parish are so much covered with flints, that when the canes are planted, it is necessary to bring mould from other land to cover them ; and it is not uncommon to observe two or three different species of soil in the same field ; and hence will arise a difficulty, and too often a mistake, in the method of cultivation, and in the quantity of manure.

A great deal of useless labour was formerly bestowed in picking up the flints that lay loose upon the land, and in collecting them into heaps ; whereas this last practice not only disfigured it, but deprived it of moisture and fertility : and I do not know whether the same trouble that was manifest in gathering them together, would not be better laid out by

VOL. II.            S            strewing

strewing them again over those parts from which they were taken.

Next to cane-land, that soil which produces provisions in the greatest abundance is the most valuable : for my own part, I should at any time affix a more considerable price to a hundred acres of fine provision-ground, than I should to the same quantity, of the best kind, that is particularly adapted to the perfection of the cane ; and I should hope that in this position I am not singular.

The prevailing soil in the mountains, and that which is most favourable to the propagation of the plantain-tree, the coco, and the yam, is a black mould; made rich by the decay of leaves and other vegetable substances, upon a clay, and thickly sown with loose and flinty stones ; and this kind of earth is generally found upon the sides of the hills in Westmoreland ; I mean in those parts in which the seasons are the most constant. In the glades, the mould

mould may vary ; but even there a good clayey bottom is seldom wanting ; and where this is found, there is always fertility.

The value of pasture-land is various ; a piece of guinea-grass, well fenced-in and watered, is the most esteemed for fattening cattle ; it will sooner give them the appearance of plumpness : but when fed upon this artificial production, they do not die so well, to use the butcher's term, as those that are purchased from the natural herbage of the country.

The short and open pastures are the best feeding places in the rainy seasons, and the ruinates after the weather shall have been some time dry ; nor can any estate be said to be complete that has not such a resource as the last in time of drought.

Timber land, if it be at no great distance from the works, is exceedingly valuable ; more so, perhaps, than those who have it in abundance may imagine. Upon old

settled estates the more estimable kinds are become, from that waste which was formerly the consequence of plenty, and of latter years from the spur of distress or from personal avarice, almost entirely extinct; and upon those plantations, the works of which were formerly constructed of mahogany, there is hardly a tree to be now found for the most contracted purposes.

The subordinate kinds of timber are likewise, from the increased extension of the buildings, from the destruction of the storms, and from the continual and necessary reparations which they have occasioned, extremely curtailed in size and contiguity; insomuch that many estates that are entirely surrounded by mountains, are obliged to look for timber at a very considerable distance, and are perhaps constrained besides to make a road to carry it out upon some distant property, or upon a neighbouring parish.

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The meaner sorts of wood are not without their use and value; such as are proper for posts and rails, or such as will supply the negroes with rafters, palisadoes, or even firing: and here I cannot help observing one advantage which *they* possess over the poor of other countries; for fuel, the most necessary as well as comfortable article of life, they have at hand without expence, and the procurement of which, at least for their domestic wants, is not attended with much anxiety and toil. I may likewise add, the blessings of a house without rent, of clothes and food without purchase, and an ample independency of land without the renewals of lease, the rapacity of stewards, the rigours of ejectment, or the grinding inhumanity of an avaricious, or the profligate wants of an extravagant and unfeeling landlord.

*They* know not the heart-breaking humiliation of being obliged to submit to haughtiness and power; and being born to slavery, as the Creole negroes are, they

do not inveigh against the curses of dependence.

*They* do not feel the pangs of generosity abused, of confidence betrayed; nor are *their* feelings wounded by the serpent tooth of deep ingratitude, which tears the bosom that afforded protection to weakness, and comfort to distress.

Unacquainted with chicanery, that pest of society, that exterminator of liberal intercourse and private peace—that vulture which preys upon the bowels of misery, and which would sooner starve itself than not find the means to destroy; unacquainted with this plague that corrupts the wholesome fountain of justice, what *they* therefore have, they possess in safety and in peace.

The time may come, when humanity will assert her rights, and set her foot upon the neck of villainy; when those adders that lurk in pusillanimous safety, and sting unseen, shall be brought out to public chastisement

tisement and open shame; when the bitter reflections of a life consumed in wickedness, and the upbraidings of wealth occasioned by, and accumulated with, the sighs and tears of wretchedness and want, may awaken a death-bed repentance, and open, when too late for compunction, the gates of horror and the abysses of despair.

Let those who have made an unhallowed use of power, and who have converted the enviable source of doing good, from the channel of benevolence, to augment the current of collusion and injustice; and who, from the petty motives of personal interest, have sacrificed where it would have been but justice to save—let those who have been actuated by one or other of these principles, in time consider that feeling extends beyond the grave, and that where there has been a worldly iniquity there will not fail to be an eternal judgement.

It may be said that there would not be law, were there not injustice; but justice

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should still be tempered with mercy ; and to this end, a court of equity was created to restrain its rigours, and to protect the weak from the overwhelming power of the strong : but the commission of a personal injury, where no moral wrong was intended, is often practised by inhumanity, when it ought to be disclaimed by law.

The unconstitutional practice of arrest for debt is a reflection upon the enlightened manners of the age, and a reproach to a land of freedom ; of this the negro is by birth and situation ignorant, and has hence one advantage of which his master is deprived : and while the latter is open to this disgrace, and subject to its inflictions, the former lies under its protection, and is unacquainted with its terrors.

Those who suffer without intentional delinquency, have a *right* to complain ; but those who deservedly suffer, ought not to speak. Where the finger of God puts a caveat upon our worldly means, the man of bene-

benevolence will pity, while the interested wretch will only measure his persecution by his disappointments.

The situation of a prisoner for debt is the most deplorable that falls under the knowledge of our laws, inasmuch as he may be innocent although unfortunate ; and it often happens that the creditor who confines his person, sequesters his means, and drives him to despair, is in fact the real delinquent, and may have himself offended those laws, by extortion, by usury, and fraud, the current of which he has been enabled to turn by the possession of those means which the other wants ; for money has been too often found to purchase money ; nay, it has likewise happened that a man's property, in the hands of others, has been used as a bribe to his own destruction.

If a person, from the principles of humanity and friendship, shall be so weak as to become a security for another, and this last

last shall prove a villain, the innocent man suffers, and the guilty escapes; and an act of feeling, and a proof of innate goodness of heart, is often followed with a duration of pangs from which even the felon is exempted, and between which there is hardly a line of discrimination to mark the offences.

A man who steals, or commits a murder, is in a summary manner tried, and brought to justice; he is soon condemned, or as soon acquitted; but the debtor, whose difficulty of releasement increases with confinement, and who perhaps at the moment of his arrest was only indebted ten pounds, and had twenty to pay it, will find this original sum more than doubled or trebled, when he hopes for enlargement, and has found those who were willing to satisfy the first, but who have not sufficient power to discharge the latter sum: and this is a hardship to which every debtor is more or less subject.

If

If a man be conscientiously willing to give up all he has for the honest satisfaction of his legal debts, and it is made to appear, upon the face of his accounts, that he has a sufficiency to do it, ought one rapacious creditor, whose demand perhaps, upon an equitable scrutiny, could not be legalized, to obtain and to keep full possession of all he has, to the loss and ruin of the liberal and indulgent? Ought forbearance to suffer from collusion, and humanity be choused by interest? If the debtor have not wherewithal, from personal or real means (and I suppose this deficiency to have arisen from calamities which could neither have been foreseen or prevented, and not from extravagance, play, ineptitude, and other vices), should the debtor I say, be thus circumstanced, ought the creditor to have a power, Shylock like, to cut into his heart? Are there wretches in life so dead to nature and to God, as not to shudder at the bare idea of such enormity? That there are—but here let my voice be silent, and let my pen be still.

Peter

Peter the First of Russia, whom the polished kingdoms of Europe were pleased to distinguish at the outset of his reign by the appellation of Barbarian, enacted some laws for the personal protection of his subjects, particularly the poorer ranks, which would reflect an honour upon a more enlightened age : and let the lover of justice compare in this place our institutions upon this head with his.

He insisted that lawyers should be employed at a handsome salary, that they might execute justice, give relief to the injured, and support to the distressed, without any extortionate fee, or independent reward ; and they were obliged, to prevent partiality or affection, to determine the different suits in rotation, without chicanery and without delay. If they were ever convicted of bribery, or of throwing impediments in the forms of law, or were guilty of any malpractices which were derogatory to that professional practice which he meant, as being just, should be likewise considered

considered as honourable, they immediately underwent the punishment of the knout, and were banished with rigour and infamy to the wilds of Siberia.

If our laws were to undergo a revision, and were to be made more safe and beneficial for the creditor, without the absolute depression of him who owes; if the rotten branches of the tree were to be lopt off, that the stem of justice might thence become more vigorous, what glory would not redound to that legal pruner, what security would not be given to property, and what comfort to real misfortune and to unmerited distress !

If restrictions were to be put upon credit, I mean upon that credit whose foundation as well as superstructure are those of interest, there would consequently and immediately follow a diminution of debt; and out of the thousands that annually languish in the gloomy mansions of confinement and despair, there are many who are more entitled to commiseration than deserving of rigour; and

and who are not so morally delinquent as those who have betrayed them into confidence, opposed usury to their necessities, and sworn to the actual existence of debts which they were conscious to be illegal, and thus fly at once in the face of justice and of God.

That a man who can, but will not, ought to be made to pay his debts, is a syllogism that the worldly man is daily chiming through all its possible changes ; and there is not an axiom perhaps of more consequence to a community, and which ought to be more rigorously defined : but then it does not follow that usury should be justified, and that rapacity should be entitled to favour.

Any enforcement, be it otherwise ever so rigorous, would be less disgraceful and vexatious than that which is vainly expected to proceed from personal duresis ; a practice which does not better, but is eventually found to injure the rights of the creditor, as the spirits of the debtor are broken,

broken, his labour of course suspended, and the only means which he had left, by which the payment of his debts could be effected, are consequently tied up, and rendered inefficient: the one therefore at last loses what was originally due, and the other languishes out a miserable and an unprofitable life in goal, even though the plaintiff should relent, because he has it not in his power to satisfy the unfeeling rapacity of his attorney; and the proofs that might be adduced of this assertion are a disgrace to humanity, and a reproach to the practice of that country in which the subject is born to personal freedom, but of which it is in the power of a man, from caprice or resentment, in a summary manner to deprive him.

Arrests will be found, I am afraid, to proceed more generally from the interested views of the harpies of the law than the willing rigour of him who has trusted and been deceived; and even among those who look for payment in the sufferings and despondency of the unfortunate, are to be found

found those only who are of the most mean and insolent characters, and whose claims perhaps might be combated by law, and overturned by equity: and I think likewise that it may commonly be observed, that those who have been the most obliged, have been ultimately found to be the most ungrateful,—and to have occasioned without compunction, and to have beheld with a pusillanimous malignity and triumph, the heart-breaking agonies of a benefactor and a friend.

I am convinced that there are many who have died, and who daily continue to pay the debt of nature, unvisited of friends, neglected by relatives, and unrelieved by charity, who have resigned their lives in the mansions of shame and affliction with a more quiet and unreproving conscience than many of those enjoy who have entailed at least dejection upon, if not occasioned death to, their fellow-creatures; without being thence enabled to substantiate any good for themselves, or without having secured it in reversion to their descendants.

Of

Of the mere pettifogger the term is sufficiently disgraceful to point out *his* practice; and wretches of this description are as much despised by the humane and honourable professor, as if they were of a different species, and not more entitled to reproach than followed with contempt.

Of men of character in the law, it would be highly impertinent and unjust to speak in any other terms than in those of admiration and applause—of admiration, as the indispensable line of practice too often opens the road to numberless vexations and severities, which cannot otherwise be avoided than by a consistent and persevering clemency, and an unbiassed and conscientious integrity of heart—of applause, as the general, and hence an illiberal, censure upon this particular community will not always lead men impartially to observe, and to do honour to, the abstract virtues of the man. Those therefore, whose conduct is the result of humanity and justice, cannot

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be spoken of in terms of sufficient kindness and respect.

Distinguished as this country is now acknowledged to be, and beyond, perhaps, any former period, by Judges of talents, of candour, of patience and humanity; and independent as they have been made, to the glory of the present reign, in situation and in trust; there is great hope that the asperities of the law will be gradually worn down, its stream refined, and course made clear; and that the weeds which have long delayed its current, and made turbid its meanders, may be at length removed; that the waters may shine forth in full transparency and splendour.

It is likewise to be hoped, that the web within web, which is as often spread for the innocent as it is for the guilty, and which contains the poison of the insect without its industry, will in time be broken; and that the insidious machinations of the concealed artificer that extracts, un-  
silkworm-

silkworm-like, the valuable threads from another's bowels instead of its own, will be drawn out from his laboratory, in which he has long continued to work, and crushed with all his instruments of mischief beneath the foot, to rise and sting no more.

These reflections naturally introduce another, in which every man who honours abilities, and who values justice, must feel himself in some measure affected: for of one of the greatest luminaries of the law that this country, or perhaps any other, has ever beheld, the beams, alas! are now declining: how tenderly impressive then, and how much to be lamented, must be the setting of such a day!

Who can reflect upon the failure of such abilities to adorn and to improve the various walks of ornamental and busy life; of language so persuasive, of elocution so harmonious, and of periods so refined, without recurring to the times of ancient Rome, when Cicero either persuaded, melted, or

overpowered his auditory, by the mellifluous incatena-  
tion of his sounds, or the  
transcendent weight of his all-powerful  
eloquence !

Who but must lament the loss of talents so amiable in society, of pursuits so honourable to human nature, of virtues so interesting and so useful to man, without reflecting how difficult it will be to repair them ? But, alas ! so ungrateful is mankind, that the sun-beams which shall have warmed him to-day, will no sooner set than be forgotten.

The farewell Epistle of the Bar to this highly-gifted and impartial Judge, than which a more honourable appellation is not to be found upon the list of manly virtues, will ever remain as an affecting memorial of their sensibility, and as an amiable record of their respect and veneration ; and even those who are not otherwise connected with the profession, than as it is intended to substantiate right, and to lead to peace,

peace, cannot help feeling the value of a correspondence which does equal honour to those who have addressed, and to the estimable object by whom their address was with corresponding sentiments, and an overflowing sensibility of heart; so graciously received.

After the dignified retreat of so distinguished a character, it is however a public consolation to find the promise of judicial abilities already expand upon that seat from which such streams of eloquence, and depth of judgement, were known to flow; and great indeed must be the merit of him, and for ever remembered *his* talents and *his* name, who shall be deemed a proper successor to fill a station of such magnitude; a station that requires abilities of various kinds, and which never appears to so much advantage as when justice is attempered by mercy.

If rigour be necessarily found, as it must often be, the attendant of justice, we should

still consider that man must be sometimes “cruel, only to be kind;” for by the amputation only of a diseased limb can the body, under particular circumstances, be preserved: the surgeon therefore who betrays the weakness of compassion when he is employed in the painful execution of his office, is incapable of duty, and ultimately destroys those members which his skill was called in to save: thus therefore indiscriminate pity, however amiable it may be in a private life, would be dangerous in a judge, and lead to future enormities, which a calm integrity and firmness of conduct, might in the first instance have prevented; for individual suffering should always give way to the general good.

The time must come when the gradual decays of nature may awaken also the sentiments of regret towards another Lord, whose manly and unremitting integrity of heart, both of which were eminently conspicuous upon a late trying and affecting occasion, have long dignified, and still continue

tinue to uphold, another court, in which equity appears to be securely enshrined, and to which (when the infirmities of life shall call him away from a public situation) the persecuted may hereafter look in vain for protection, the weak for support, and the injured for redress.

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FOR the digressions I have lately made, I flatter myself that I shall, by some of my readers, stand excused ; and that they will patiently attend me to those further descriptions and remarks which will naturally arise from the subject ; and which will help to swell this work, too heavy already in matter and in size, beyond my first intention ; but which has in some measure arisen from the uncertain situation in which the West-India islands at present stand, and upon which subject (however popular and humane) it becomes the duty of every one to speak, who can throw information

upon it from experience, can correct errors from facts, or who can advance any thing in mitigation of those charges of inhumanity towards a fellow-creature, and of impiety towards God, under which the sellers, the buyers, and the possessors of slaves, so generally and so unjustly labour.

Where enormities are practised, and delinquency of heart still continues to prevail, they should be brought out from their secret recesses, and exposed, if not to chastisement, at least to public shame : and as the negroes are subject to corporal inflictions, and too often without a crime ; so should the white people, to whom they are to look up for conduct and example, be not exempted from the punishments of imprisonment or fine, where they have been found guilty of a wanton abuse of power, and have apportioned their castigations, not to the extent of the offence, but to the savage malignity of an unfeeling and a resentful heart.

It was my first intention to draw a line of separation between the white people and the negroes in Jamaica ; but as they are so intimately connected and blended together, I find it almost impossible to divide them : as far therefore as there seems to be a natural dependence of one upon the other, I shall consider them as one mass ; nor let the pride of colour be offended, when I observe that the planter is infinitely more indebted to his slave, than this latter is under obligations to him ; and if the first be humane from interest, and the last be industrious from principle, I will only ask, on which side does the merit lie ?

Before I enter more minutely into this arduous, and the more so as it is now become an interesting, subject, I must take leave to return to those particulars which claim a preference to those intended remarks ; and I shall consequently attempt to resume, and (if possible, after such a digression as I have ventured to intrude) to connect what

I now have to say with what has already gone before, and shall hope to be more regular and consistent in what may follow.

In adverting to the different soils that are to be met with in the island of Jamaica, there are some particular kinds to which I have not attended, and which indeed do not deserve a minute description; but all those have been, I think, noticed, that are in preference selected for the cultivation of the cane, and its various dependencies; and I must beg leave to refer the reader to the Introduction, for a general and specific valuation of the sugar-plantation, and for an account of the heavy burdens under which its uncertain produce is doomed to labour.

I shall now proceed, according to a former intimation, to make some cursory remarks upon the climate of Jamaica as felt by those with whom I have happened to be acquainted. I may likewise speak from

from the personal experience of many with whom I have been more intimately connected ; and I do not believe that out of a given number of people, and for the same series of years, fewer deaths in proportion can be adduced in any climate.

For the mortality that happens, which is not by any means so considerable now as it was formerly used to be, a great many reasons may be ostensibly assigned ; but a detail of this subject, independently of my incompetency to make it, is inconsistent with my present plan, which only affects to treat of visible appearances, without presuming to dive into the causes by which effects have been produced.

The dread of a seasoning, as it is called, has, I think, a visible effect upon the spirits of every stranger who visits the country ; nor are the Creoles themselves, upon their return from England to their native island, by any means divested of this apprehension : and I rather believe that this impending terror,

terror, with the fear of exercise, and a too sudden alteration of diet, are frequently the first causes that produce languor, and imaginary illness, upon those who complain ; and that, in fact, not so much is to be imputed to the latitude as the alarm which that latitude occasions. Too many indeed fall early victims, on the other hand, to an immoderate use of inflammatory and pernicious liquors ; and numbers perish at the first accesses of disease for want of proper care, and medical attendance : whereas, if an experienced nurse be in time procured, and professional skill at the commencement of a fever be introduced, I am apt to think that of this complaint a greater proportion would die in England than would be observed, in an extensive practice, to perish in Jamaica ; but as many people may perhaps differ from me in this point, I shall rest at present satisfied with my own opinion : for although I can hardly be said to have had any regular health for more than a very few months at a time, for ten or eleven years

years in that country, yet for such a constant indisposition I can assign a cause; but with which, as it cannot interest, I shall not presume to insult, the attention of the reader.

The climate of this large and beautiful island is more changeable than those even who compare the vicissitudes of northern seasons may be disposed to credit; and who, of consequence, calculating the annual revolutions of the seasons through wind and rain, through sunshine and through fogs, through snow and sleet, through tempests and through frosts, will naturally conclude that alterations cannot happen in those regions where the heat is supposed to be always intense, and the cold is not suspected ever to prevail.

It should be in this place remembered that the sensations of cold and heat are only relative impressions, and are found to vary as much from personal feelings, and from individual constitution, and from situation  
of

of mountain, valley, or plain, as from any precise idea that the philosopher, or the naturalist, may affix to latitude ; and of this assertion the different regions of the island I am now attempting to describe, can bear a full and authentic evidence.

The seasons, on the southern and on the northern sides of Jamaica, are almost as opposite in their periods of harvest, as are their points upon the compass ; insomuch that about the time that the crops are terminated on the former, the process of sugar-making begins in the latter.

In the same parishes the heat will vary according to situation and to soil ; will sometimes receive coolness from the ocean ; and at other times the breeze that ruffles its surface, and the glare that is occasioned by this inconstant element, will be almost insufferable.

The power of the sun is intense at sea, is less oppressive upon the plains, is more tolerable

tolerable upon the hills, and becomes temperate upon the mountains ; but still the comparisons of heat will greatly depend upon the influx of the air which happens to be introduced to ventilate those situations into which it is admissible, or from which it is, by locality, expelled.

It is not, however, *always* that the tops of mountains are more cool than the sides of hills ; and these latter will be sometimes found more obvious to the sunny rays than even the plains. The vallies are more generally hot than the level pastures, and the open fields ; the dales are more so than the vallies ; and the dells would be insufferable, from confinement and an exclusion of air, did not their particular situations at the same time defend them from the ardours of the vertic sun.

The heat in Italy and Spain is often more oppressive than I have ever felt it in Jamaica ; and I think that I have suffered

as much from it in Switzerland, and in England, in the dog-days (particularly once in an excursion through the sandy parts of Norfolk), as I have ever done in the West-Indies at the most inclement seasons of the year; and the custom of taking fiestas or naps in the afternoon, which so much prevails in the above-mentioned countries, is now universally exploded (excepting by old people, who are attached to ancient manners, and whose infirmities require repose) in those parts of the Island with which I was at all acquainted.

When the north wind sets in with regularity, and continues to blow for any length of time, there are but few climates, during this agreeable period, that can be more pleasant and refreshing than that which is the subject of these pages: the sun is not, at that time, immediately vertical, and the intensity of its rays is allayed by flitting clouds and passing showers, which, while they serve to brace up the innervate system, at the same time exhibit

a constant variety of effects upon that diversity of landscape which in many parts, or indeed all over the island, is observed to glow with such vivid and enchanting splendour.

At this particular season the mornings and the evenings, more especially among the mountains, are not only temperate, but are often cold ; insomuch that a great coat is by no means a cumbersome appendage of dress ; nor is a counterpane an article that can be dispensed with at night ; while a fire, throughout the day, becomes not only a cheerful, but an useful companion.

I have known it so chilly, even upon the plains, and in almost as hot a situation as any in the Island, at the time of the blowing of this wind, that I have found exercise, solely taken for the purpose of warmth, not only comfortable, but absolutely requisite ; and at this particular season, and indeed at all times of the year, cloth coats are worn by the old and infirm,

and are now preferred as dress by even the healthy and the young.

There are but few climates that admit of so many changes in a day as that which I am now describing is found to do in the rainy seasons. Although the mornings be chilly, yet, from about eight o'clock until ten, or, in other words, before the sea-breeze begins to set in, the heat is oftentimes almost suffocating : but if a person happen to be upon the sea-beach, or upon any elevation open to its influence, it is hardly possible to conceive any sensation more reviving than the first impression of the air, which imperceptibly gains strength by time, invigorates the spirits, encourages exertion, and dispels that listlessness and languor which would otherwise oppress labour, and melt the body, however inured before to industry and toil.

The effects of the sea-breeze, as connected with the varieties it occasions in the landscapes of the country, are only different

different from the norths in the gentleness of aspiration : the latter shake the productions of the earth with noise and motion ; but the former pays its stated visits to the canes, the plantain-trees, and woods, with a pleasing and a melancholy murmur : *this* ruffles the current with easy ripples, which again subside into a smooth and polished expanse as soon as the last breathing dies away ; but *that*, more boisterous in its approach, and importunate in its ventilations, constrains the uplifted waves to dash with fury upon the rocks, or to break with heavy billows upon the indignant and resounding shore.

I have already taken notice of those alterations of the climate which almost daily happen in the rainy seasons,—the chilly dawn, the interval between that and the commencement of the sea-breeze, and the sudden effects the last has when immediately succeeding the former : I shall therefore now mention the other varieties

of the atmosphere that are constantly produced, and alternately observed.

When the clouds begin to gather, and to prepare themselves for the bursting deluge, the sighings of the breeze discontinue, as it were, at once, and a temporary pause ensues. The eye looks with anxiety for the first flash; the ear listens attentively to catch the distant thunder; and the heat, while they are thus brewing the storm, and the face of nature is darkened by their sable and impending shadows, is violent in the extreme: but so soon as the overcharged and bursting masses begin to pour down their watery contents, and the showers rattle upon the shingles, and overflow the plains,—the earth is irradiated by momentary and terrific lightnings, the air is, in a manner, rent asunder by the deafening and incessant peals which break like tremendous artillery around; the oppression of the air begins to be removed, and a sudden chill succeeds, and by an immediate contrast

contrast very sensibly affects, and in some instances revives, and in others distresses, the feelings.

Should the rains discontinue after their usual descent of one or two hours, the sun again darts forth with a plenitude of rays; the clouds at their departure put on a great variety of beautiful and aerial forms, and breaking among the mountains, and trailing over their summits, very frequently encounter the water-spout in their progress, and disperse together their contents in the air.

The pastoral world seems to smile with renovated charms; the trees, without any sensible visitation of the breeze, disencumber themselves at once of their pearly honours, which the glowing beams illuminate, and make appear like showers of descending gems, which retain their lustre in their descent, but fall at last to the ground to shine no more.

If to the varying pores we bring the day,  
 Stones become gems, which once in darkness lay.  
 The brilliant only waters on the fight,  
 Reflecting back the sun's prolific light.

After the rains shall have subsided, the breeze will frequently continue its feeble but refreshing efforts until the evening, and at the final departure of the sunny rays will imperceptibly decline, and die away ; and between this time and the setting-in of the land wind, a different species of heat will be observed ; and the patience of domestic society will be consequently tried by successive flights of cock-roaches, winged ants, of sand-flies and musquitoes, the assaults of which, and the fumigations that are vainly used to disperse or to extirpate them, contribute to make an evening after rain in that latitude a state of bodily impatience, and of fretful but unavailing complaint.

The land wind in general begins to blow soon after the sea-breeze has discontinued its aspirations ; and as it commonly continues

tinues with freshness through the night, it renders those situations in which it can gain admittance, sometimes cool, and always pleasant.

The heat of the nights in Jamaica, to speak from my own experience, I do not think at all insufferable ; nor do I recollect that, during a residence of nearly thirteen years in the island, I was as many times incommoded by its oppression. A free passage is generally left for the admission of air ; but, at some particular periods, the venetians are shut, and a counterpane, and sometimes a blanket, where before rejected, are then deemed comfortable at least, and are by some people thought to be indispensably necessary.

The air is so subtle in some particular situations; that a flannel waistcoat cannot be well dispensed with; and the *dews* in the mountains are so heavy, and the fogs so impenetrably thick, that the loss of a

great coat will be sensibly felt ; and the different articles of dress that the traveller has occasion to wear in the morning, become so cold and damp as to make the sensation of them uncomfortable to the body ; and yet I could never learn that these latter circumstances were followed by sickness, although an exposure to the *first* is attended with danger.

The climate of the mountains is always temperate, compared to that of the plains ; but even upon these it will likewise vary according to aspect ; and indeed a regular change throughout all the gradations that different latitudes can occasion in moderate regions, short only of congelation, may be fought for, and found, in one or other of the districts of Jamaica, from intensity of heat to moderation of warmth, and at last to cold that will chill at least, although it may not be sufficiently penetrating to benumb.

Whether

Whether the mountains or the plains be the most healthy, can be only suggested by partial experience ; the population of the former being so very inconsiderable, compared to that of the latter, that longevity, ascertained by fact, cannot be with satisfaction determined.

There are many people who retire at particular seasons of the year from low-land situations to those that are more elevated ; and as there are not many who make their constant residence all the year round upon the latter, it would be difficult to establish that as a fact which may with better reason be only considered as conjecture.

In the rainy periods I should prefer the mountains, notwithstanding the difficulties of access, and the inconvenience, if not the fatigue, of exercise : in the time of the norths I should choose the plains, as it may there be conveniently taken without either.

Much

Much has been said of the insalubrity of this particular climate ; and it must be confessed that it has been for years, although perhaps not quite so much as the East-Indies, the grave of Europe : but for the mortality that has happened, and that still continues to destroy the inhabitants of more northern regions, many reasons may be adduced, but the investigation of which more properly belongs to that profession to which the explanation of causes and the effects of disorders, whether they be the consequences of latitude, or whether they depend upon other circumstances, can be only referred.

There are many particularities that are obvious in the general constitution of man, which we all know by experience will vary with climate, assume fresh habits from an exchange of food, and take a different turn from an alteration of hours, of exercise, of occupations and pursuits ; and these should be impartially weighed before we arraign the

the intemperance of a latitude, when in fact we ought to calculate the mortality of its inhabitants by the imprudence of the man.

Europeans stand in such dread of a seasoning, that they too frequently, upon their first arrival, forego at once their former habits of life, and exchange the custom of good living and of exercise for the more pernicious ones of unnecessary abstinence and destructive repose.

Excesses are, certainly, in all countries, and at all times, to be carefully and unremittingly eschewed: but it often happens that nature rather requires a regimen that will restore, than one that will debilitate, the animal system; for the vigour of the nerves, when once destroyed by the sickness, and consequent languor of tropical climes, will seldom recover their former tone; and hence it is that those liquors that weaken the stomach, such as raw and new spirits in particular, engender disorders of a painful and a fatal tendency, than which

which none has swept off a more melancholy proportion, in a given time, of Europeans, than the dry cholic, a disease which is now, in a manner, expelled from the country by the fortunate introduction, and more general use, of honest porter and Madeira wine.

In those latitudes in which the animal spirits are so much depressed, and the vital functions are so much weakened by a continuity of heat; where the waste of nature, occasioned, as in some particular subjects, by a constant dissolution of the solids; where so great a consumption of the supports and energies of life are subject to such constant disarrangement and decay—we are consequently taught by physical experience, that nothing but substantial and wholesome diet will restore the nerves to their former tension and elasticity: hence diluting liquors, such as punch, and wine and water, are not reckoned by any means so wholesome, and they are certainly less nutritive; than wine and beer,

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The man who perseveres in a regular medium between abstemiousness and intemperance; who does not dread the sun by day, nor brave the dews by night; who is convinced that exercise conducts to appetite, and that that, undepraved, is the symbol of health; who does not suffer fatigue to overcome his body, nor languor to depress his mind; who does not encourage the little errors and omissions of his negroes to ruffle, to fret, and irritate, his disposition; and who, more than all, does not murmur at the dispensations of Providence when he sees a valuable slave cut off by accident or disease—the man, I say, who can thus exercise his philosophy, may pass his life with as much health, and attain as vigorous an old-age in Jamaica, as the inhabitants can possibly do in any other clime.

Of men whose years have been extended beyond the common calculations of nature, there are many instances, among the negroes as well as the white inhabitants of that island;

Mand ; and I have frequently heard it remarked, that the lives of many people, whose infirmities would have led in all probability to an early grave in England, have been prolonged by the genial and restorative warmth of that country.

The negroes are certainly, in themselves, a healthy race of people ; nor are they by any means subject to that multiplicity of diseases which shake, undermine, and at last destroy, the constitutions of the inhabitants of the more frigid regions. Many are liable to rheumatic pains : but of those afflicted with the gout, I have not, within my own personal observation, met with one ; and I greatly fear that consumptions, when they happen, are more often the consequence of inanition, than of colds neglected, or of a natural tendency to this disease in the patient and afflicted slave.

The negroes are certainly better attended in Jamaica, in sickness, than the generality of

of people in any country which I have had the fortune to visit, and short of power and opulence, ever are ; and the better sort of practitioners in the Island, I mean those who have received a regular education, and have made surgery and physic their study and profession, are as intelligent and skilful, as patient and humane, as are to be met with, among professors of this useful and respectable class, in any other country.

If a negro be afflicted with a disorder of an alarming magnitude, the doctor, who attends the plantation, will continue with him to watch the progress of the disease, will direct, and see given to him, proper medicine and wholesome food ; and will not leave him until he shall have pronounced the danger over. Some individuals indeed have such extensive practice, that they cannot always personally give that strict and regular attention that the occasion may require : if therefore subordinate skill may not be successful, yet the alacrity of duty is at least conspicuous ; and where

where a man exercises his profession to the best of his talents; and shows a willing solicitude; and discovers a humane disposition towards his patient, it is as much as justice can require.

The plantation doctors certainly labour under some aspersions which I do not think they deserve, and are subject to some mortifications and difficulties from which a liberal profession should be exempted; and some strictures upon this subject might with propriety have found their way in the future course of these remarks.

It is very notorious to those who have long resided in the West-Indies, and who are acquainted with the endemial diseases of the country, and who, from a long and a minute observation of those to which the Africans are subject, that many of this latter description import from their native climate, disorders which have been long contracted, have been neglected, become desperate, and hence incapable of cure.

Many

Many are swept off by contractions thus imported; some fall the early victims to a change of climate; and others lay the foundations of death by an inordinate use of inflammatory liquors: some are worn down by watchfulness and fatigue; and many, too many, I fear, are lost through want of that common sustentation, in the times of hurricanes and drought, which the just decree of Providence designed for all, but of which the patient and the humble are too often deprived by the neglect or inhumanity of men.

Of the mortality among the African slaves, much, in this age of public commiseration and of private feeling, has been lately written; and too much has perhaps been said. Exaggeration has precluded the possibility of contingencies, and the glow of humanity has not suffered the coolness of reason to calculate the proportionate decays of nature; and there are some people who seem to think that negroes are

exempted from the conditions of humanity; and would never die were not their deaths occasioned by human cruelty.

I much fear (as I dread the consequences) that a laudable wish to remove imaginary evils will beget others of serious concern; if the errors of ideal commiseration be not in time corrected; and the personal security, and the feasible comforts, of the slaves established upon a more permanent foundation than that of declamation without argument, a complaint of grievances where they do not exist, an indiscriminate charge of cruelties which may have been detected in individuals, but which do not in the general mass prevail; and ofabolition, the consequences of which will press down with accumulated labour, and bring to an early grave at least 450,000 slaves who are already domesticated in our islands. And this will be the consequence, of what? A speculative sense of humanity towards a race of men to whom it is our interest to be

be kind, and who probably labour under more oppression in their native country, and who slumber in the shades of ignorance, when they might be brought forth to personal protection, the peace of domestic society, and may be instructed by religion to consider themselves as men.

There are many sensible and benevolent persons, who have engaged with an honest zeal in this very popular service, who profess to be Christians in theory, but who unluckily do not much contend for the practice : for the consolatory and the certain dependence upon a future state, which religion can alone insure, can never pervade the bosom of an African in his native soil, to support his indurance there, and to teach him a dependence upon his hereafter : a removal, therefore, from thence might secure him comforts of which, from situation, he must be at present ignorant, and hold up those which in a future state may be everlasting.

It has been contended, that the population of our islands may be preserved without the introduction of foreign slaves; and one or two properties have been quoted as a corroboration of this fact: but what is the partial adduction of three or four, to the calculation of one thousand and sixty-one sugar-estates, which are now settled in Jamaica alone?

Some singular circumstances of soil or situation, and other corresponding causes, might have favoured this increase; that part of the country might not have been visited by hurricanes and droughts, and their constant attendants, famine and disease; the land might not have required much cultivation and labour, and might have been incapable of making much produce, and hence of calling forth much exertion: so that one exception, that begets hypothesis, is suffered to stand as a datum to substantiate general facts.

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The accidents alone to which the negroes are subject, and the good in particular more than the worthless, would be a melancholy bar to the population of the country ; the numbers that are annually killed by lightning, by the fall of trees, by the sudden rise and rapidity of the torrents, and by the numberless contingencies to which their situations and exposure at all seasons of the year must make them subject, would influence in a considerable manner their decrease ;—but when the more heavy calamities of the island are taken into the description, I should hope that some compassion would be felt for the planter as well as for the slave, as, by the preservation or the loss of the latter, the *farmer* can be said to stand or fall,

The negroes that were supposed to perish in the different storms that happened in Jamaica between the years 1780 and 1787 and by the consequences that fatally ensued, were estimated at 15,000 (the whole amount in the island being 255,700);

and the disorders occasioned thereby, the stagnation of population in consequence of inanition, the absolute want that brought some, and the despondency that hurried others, to the grave, together with the additional labour that fell upon the strong in consequence of the inability of the weak, might be calculated, without exaggeration, at several thousands more.

We will only suppose that the negroes, upon several of the properties which were visited by this calamity, had been previously indulged to the utmost; that their work was not proportionate to their strength; that, out of a principle of humanity alone, only one hundred hogsheads of sugar were made, when without exertion they could, from corporal powers, and from a superfluity of provisions, and the comforts of clothing, have made two: yet in times of dearth the whole amount must be fed; and thus their distresses would be proportionate to their numbers, and the mortality not lightened by the little produce that would be

be comparatively made. If therefore an estate cannot preserve its population by a given number of slaves, how is it to continue it when one fourth perhaps or more shall be swept off in one year by a calamity and its consequences, when the same calamities and the same consequences may occur, as was unfortunately the case, and with only one exception, for several years?

I wonder it has not been alledged, that it is cruelty in the extreme to bring them from their native country, in which we do not hear that such successive ravages have been committed by the elements, to expose them to the fury of the winds, and the additional terrors of famine and disease in another region, in which they must be dependent upon others for the preservation of that life, which in their own would not have been subject to danger!

Considered in this light, their exile, (because in many instances, if not in most, it was involuntary) cannot help striking the

breast of the humane with very just and feeling impressions: the right of man to remove a fellow-creature from safety, to place him in a situation of actual danger, may here be combated upon the ground of natural liberty and personal justice, and will certainly triumph over the language of necessity; but here the advocates of humanity appear to be silent, as indeed they should:—they have a right to arraign the mortality occasioned by the cruelty of men; but it is their duty to bend without complaint to the awful inflictions of Heaven.

To continue the cultivation of the West-India islands as they now stand, and to keep up their present extent of produce, will be impossible without an importation—without an importation those slaves thereon will gradually diminish, the crops of course decline, and the population, as the produce, will necessarily be, in the course of no inconsiderable number of years, extinct and at an end.

If

If a prohibition were to be only imposed upon the African trade for a few years, than which no measure could give more effectual relief to the planter, the eyes of many would be then opened, which appear to be at present blind, to the true interests of their country ; and they might then find that their humanity began at a wrong end ; and that, while they are traversing seas in quest of speculative philanthropy, numbers of their own condition and colour stand more really in want of that protection and fellow-feeling which, from motives of pure and unbiased pity, they are anxious to extend to the inhabitants of Africa.

If abolition, unconditional, unqualified abolition shall take place, our interest in the West-India islands must be at an end ; seventy millions of property will wear away with time, and be sunk at last ; the revenue will suffer an annual diminution of three millions at least ; the price of sugar, which is now become a necessary article of life, must be immediately enhanced ; discontent,

men;

grievance and dissatisfaction may dismember the empire, from which too large a jewel has been lately torn ; the necessity of additional taxes may puzzle the minister, divide the legislature, and distress the people, who, indignant perhaps at exactions at home, which might have been provided for by foreign resource, may become disaffected to government, renounce their country, and take refuge in a neighbouring kingdom, which may profit from our weaknesses and combat, and lastly overpower us with our own strength.

Next to abolition, emancipation comes as the second innovation upon the list ; for it is natural to suppose, that the same ideas of benevolence that will cut off the communication between Africa and the Islands, will extend to the latter ;—and that the negroes, all at once, whether they will or no, or without the adduction of any proof, that liberty will make them happy, are to be enfranchised, and independent of labour and of men, let what will be the

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consequence to those whose property they are, under whose government they live, and by whom alone they can be protected and safe.

It seems to be forgotten, that the colonies were planted, were peopled, and encouraged, by provisional laws enacted in their favour by the legislature of England, under the faith and guarantee of which many thousands of people have emigrated from their native countries, taken up and purchased lands in those regions, cleared, built, settled, and planted at their own expence, depending upon the shipping of Great-Britain and of Ireland for supplies, and freighting those vessels home with a barter that has opened a new channel of wealth, which for a century at least has flowed with one rich and augmenting stream to fertilize the mother country.

Is the national honour to suffer for the speculation of individuals? Is the sacred word of the legislature to be frittered away  
by

by the shadowy suggestions of humanity, when the real substance of personal safety, of personal protection, and the comforts that ought to flow from religion, shall be sacrificed ?

Abolish emigration ; and then see whether there will not be thousands of the British subjects who will stand in need of employment, and who will consequently require bread !

If those who have left their native land in search of employment and wealth in distant regions, have found their means with their industry increase ; if those means be cut off when substantiated ; if that industry be discouraged when become habitual,— the folly of emigration in the first instance will be then apparent,

It should be considered, that the person who acquires a competence in another country, does not draw any wealth from his own, at the same time that what he makes,

makers, or at least the greater part of it, flows back again to enrich the parent stream; and the numbers of people in Great - Britain (particularly in Scotland, which seems to be more marked for the persevering and successful industry of its inhabitants than any other part of the world) who are dependent upon, and supported by, the colonies, would perhaps startle the calculator, and convince the man of reflection, that large portions of land have been cleared, cultivated, and peopled, by the wealth that has been acquired in the Islands; and this fact may be easily ascertained and proved.

What will be the first consequence of emancipation? The indiscriminate sacrifice, in all probability, of the white inhabitants; or at best, some may be retained to expiate former servitude; the customs of ages will be inverted; and the people of our own colour and religion will become the degraded and the useless slaves of those

who

who formerly looked up to them for protection, food, and comfort.

What would, in the second place, become of the negroes ? Driven as they would be from their native homes, their hereditary grounds, and stripped at once of their personal possessions and domestic joys, they would set fire to their houses, destroy their provisions, live in open war, and defiance of each other, and after having exterminated those of another colour, would by degrees extirpate those of their own ; and those few who shall have survived the general massacre, must ultimately starve ; and this gradation of horror, all those who are at all acquainted with the disposition of negroes must be convinced would eventually follow.

There are but few who have been domesticated upon a plantation, who, when humanized, do not very soon feel the curses of dependence ; for that state is among the most

most woe-ful of human situations which is obliged to forego the resources of personal labour, to depend upon the fortuitous and insulating benevolence of others.

With the acquirement of liberty, the slave, as a natural consequence, immediately loses his house and ground, and is no longer allowed the plantation, clothes and provisions; and if this fatal gift be tendered at an extended period of life, the consequence will be soon felt by the anticipation of neglect and famine; and if the object of mistaken compassion be even an the vigour of life, his freedom will give a new turn to his manners and pursuits; he will become indolent and worthless, and will neither work for his family nor himself; will loiter about the streets, get drunk, pilfer, steal, or murder, and end his days at last in a work-house, or pay upon the gallows the forfeit of his ~~in~~  
*lun*ary crimes.

To suppose that the land in Jamaica, or any portion of it, can be worked by the free negroes, or the people of colour, is absurd in the extreme ; as those of this last description who have been slaves, are generally indulged about the house and offices, and have not perhaps been ever once seen to labour in the field ; and the colour of the mulatto, his birth, and education, naturally exclude him from the possible severity of toil.

Independently of these suppositions, they will be generally found to be either too young, or too old, for such laborious exertions : but were it otherwise the case, the want of that strength which attends the practice of manual labour, and that exposure to the heat and cold which are alternately experienced in the same day, would render them helpless in one instance, and incapable of any steady and efficient application, in another.

**Hold**

Hold out what recompence you will to free negroes, yet still they will not work : to make them labour in the field, would be impossible ; when they cannot, but with difficulty, be prevailed upon to exert themselves in those mechanical trades in which they were brought up, notwithstanding they may earn thereby from five to ten shillings a day.

I am convinced that there are many negroes in Jamaica, and perhaps entire bodies of them, upon different, I will go farther, and say upon *many*, nay farther still, and say upon the *generality* of estates, who would not accept of emancipation, if they were to be previously informed that they must in consequence resign those houses that were built by their ancestors, forego those grounds that were settled by their forefathers, and which have been handed down for years, and become the inheritance of the same family : for negroes absolutely respect primogeniture ; and the

eldest son takes an indisputed possession of his father's property immediately after his decease. And here I must likewise observe, as I have a pleasure in the suggestion, that they are in general attached to their families, that the young will work with cheerfulness to maintain the sickly and the weak, and that they are much disposed to pay to age respect and veneration.

In Jamaica there are supposed to be 10,000 free negroes and people of colour, which will about average 500 in each parish; out of which, if there were but 100 of the latter capable of the cultivation of the soil, or of engaging in plantation business, it would, in my opinion, very far exceed the calculation. What then must be the cultivation of a parish consisting of eighty or ninety sugar plantations, besides one hundred other settlements, that is to depend upon the manual labour of such an unseen proportion, and compared to the exertions of 18,000 negro slaves?

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The consequences that would attend abolition, would be trifling in their effects to those which would follow emancipation ; and what would happen in such a case to the white people and to the negroes, has been already foretold, without the inspiration of prophecy : nor do I even think that an indulgence to the negroes, as in the Spanish settlements, to work out their own redemption, would be attended with salutary effects in our colonies.. Deluded by the sound of liberty, the inconsiderate would scrape together their last means to purchase it, and would afterwards lament the acquirement of a shadow by the loss of a substance : for they would then be reduced to a helpless state ; they would have no house to inhabit, no grounds to supply them, no connexions to support them, no master to protect them, and no laws to do them justice. With hopes disappointed, means sequestered, and want and misery before their eyes, they would give themselves up to bitter but unavailing complaints, . might meet with rigour in

proportion to their sufferings, and be glad to find that refuge in death which in life they had unwittingly forfeited.

It would be here natural to exclaim— Is there not humanity in the West-Indies to prevent so melancholy a fate, so miserable, so untimely a dissolution? Humanity can only be measured by a possibility and a knowledge of suffering: there are those in all countries who are able, and who would be willing, to relieve particular objects; but as relief is comparative, and as in large communities there are thousands who perish unvisited, as unknown, on account of the extent of numbers,—in the more confined intercourse of society there would of course be many who, by the same mode of argument, would suffer, not from the want, but the impracticability, of relief.

If emancipation shall take place, the merchant who has lent money to support the colonies, upon the faith of the legislature

lature of Great-Britain, will suffer ; the planter, whose capital will be wrenched from him, will be ruined ; and those thousands of white people who depend upon both, in various callings and avocations of life, will have that life to begin again, and at an age too, perhaps, when they are become, from disease, and the decays of nature, incapable of labour ; and whose hearts will bend with sorrow to the grave, to think that their industry has been thus ungratefully rewarded, their dependence upon the mother country insulted, and that they must at last fall martyrs to a cruel as an unavailing confidence, or must avoid the horrors of such an end, if an equitable compensation be not made for their losses and expences, by becoming at last their own executioners.

But those who so warmly interest themselves in the cause of the *negroes*, make use of another argument—Let *them* be free, but let the Europeans labour in the cultivation of the fields ! But after un-

anconditional liberty shall have been given to the slaves, what personal protection are the white people to experience? for it cannot be supposed that those who are actually born to freedom, are to be sacrificed at the temple of a speculative deity.

That the land in Jamaica can be cultivated by white people, is a suggestion that I know not how to reconcile to common sense or reason; and seems to be one, but the most impracticable, of those speculations which have been broached upon the present subject. The most industrious even, and the most persevering of those who follow mechanical professions in the island, and who must be consequently exposed to the heat of the sun, the fatigue of the mountains, and the varieties of the seasons, very soon become oppressed by the intemperance of the climate, and observe their spirits decline, their exertions fail, and an encreasing languor prevail over their former habits of industry and toil.

Europeans

Europeans are no farther employed in the cultivation of the land than as gardeners or ploughmen ; and of those descriptions if there was, in my time, *one* upon an average of twenty estates of the former, and of the latter one upon ten, it is as much credit as I can conscientiously give to this class of labour, as founded upon my own experience.

If we should be even inclined to sacrifice fact to an hypothesis, I must consequently revert to my former argument : What is to be done with the negroes ? In what situation are they to be hereafter placed ? The Creole slaves will be exempted from that tax upon mortality, which obliges every individual to labour in his calling ; they will live a life of idleness and danger in their own country ; and they will look triumphantly down upon, and insult the manual exertions of those whom they formerly considered as their masters ; and whom they would be glad, after such a reformation shall have taken place in con-

sequence of freedom, to have again as guardians, protectors, and friends.

To suppose that Europeans could cultivate the land in the islands, or negroes that of England, would be to acknowledge that climate has not any effect upon bodily exertions, upon national distinctions, or upon endemic feelings.

But set all these objections aside ; how is Europe to furnish numbers in any proportion to the wants of the colonies ? How and where are they to be furnished with provisions, clothing, and those necessary comforts that should be always at hand to restore the sick, to support the convalescent, and to sustain the strong and healthy ?

Unused to the climate, and the fatigue and danger with which labour would be attended, they would be swept off in dreadful proportions before they could be brought to colonize ; and unacquainted with the manage-

management, and of course unskilful in the cultivation of the fields, their health with their spirits would be effectually worn down, and the feeble remnant would at last pine away in languor and disease; and would turn back their eyes with melancholy, regret, or despondency of heart, as the Africans are supposed to do, towards their native country, from which, not crimes, but a cruel policy, has driven them; and may possibly envy the situation of their unfortunate brethren at Botany Bay, a more easy soil and happy clime: for where the misery of the mind is connected with the languor of the body, it may easily be imagined how very soon these enemies of human nature will lead to dissolution.

If the colonies were to be attempted to be cultivated by white people, the whole population of Great-Britain would be unequal to the object, and would in the course of a century be melted down and become extinct: and the causes that would

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substantiate this bold assertion, may be in some measure divined from the calculations that have been made upon partial emigrations, and where attention and plenty have not been equal to the assaults of sickness and despair, the last of which has cut off more people in the West-Indies than plagues or famine.

The cruelties that have been practised by different nations in the prosecution of the African trade, are of such enormity as to shake with horror, and to melt with compassion, the bosom of the most unfeeling; but interest rides triumphant over sufferings, and owns no monitor but wealth.

For these cruelties the planter is not responsible; the miseries therefore which he occasions, should be explored; and the wanton power to inflict inhuman punishment, should be, if not suppressed, at least restrained: but surely, independently of benevolence, he cannot be so blind to his own advantage, as with his humanity to sacrifice

sacrifice his interest, to misuse what is to administer to his comforts, and to destroy what is to substantiate his ends.

The negro is the most valuable title by which the planter holds his estate ; he is by law considered as his real property ; and will he injure himself, or suffer to be hurt by others, *that*, which is to contribute to his means ; the preservation of which will help to make him affluent, and the accumulated loss of which must lead to ruin ?

If neither abolition, nor emancipation shall take place, it is hoped that a full and efficient reformation *may* ; and under this idea there cannot be a doubt but that the negroes may be made as contented and as happy, as their ideas of contentment and happiness can possibly extend ; and upon a subject upon which benevolence has so free a scope to exert its virtues, it becomes the duty of every one who either does possess, or would be supposed capable

capable of, feeling, to throw in his mite, in augmentation of the general mass, in the hope that those stigmas of cruelty under which those who live in the community of negro slaves have so long laboured, may be gradually and efficaciously removed, and that the sensibility which called for reformation may be amply requited by a knowledge of its salutary and successful effects.

The sympathetic feelings that first pointed to the relief of the slaves, were noble and humane; and although they were taken up under ideas not altogether warrantable from the actual and general experience of bodily sufferings; yet, as far as they were meant to apply to mental comfort, will always stand as striking features of the benevolence of the times, of the humanity of individuals, and of that dispassionate and persevering idea of independence, which is the symptom of a great mind; and will not fail, in the end, to hand down the promoters, the supporters, and those who shall have

have ultimately triumphed in this reformation, to the kindness of the present age, and to the applause of posterity.

It must depend upon time to see whether or no the promise of such fruit shall be matured: the experiment should be gradual, and should advance through the medium of observation and experience, before we determine upon its perfection. If any additional enforcement can take place of comfort or relief to those degraded people whose situations lay them under the commiseration of public opinion, it will be one point gained in the calculation of future contingencies; and according to the diminution of their sufferings, will a corresponding credit be given to those whose original ideas, and persevering spirit of humanity, shall ultimately give support to weakness, and hardly make perceptible the bonds of slavery.

If some men profit by bondage, there are others to whom it has proved a curse; and

and of those white people who die in Jamaica, and whose deaths are attributed to the climate, there are many, I am convinced, who are brought to the grave by the disappointment and affliction which are too often the certain consequences of an improvident purchase of slaves.

This part of the subject very naturally, and, as it were, by inference, introduces an account of the negro-merchant; who is often treated with a rigour that he does not deserve, and who has been too frequently arraigned for cruelties which it was not possible for him to license or commit.

There is a great deal of difference between the man who enveigles, and him who sells: the views of the first seem to center in the procurement of a cargo, and those of the last upon its preservation and sale. The merchant who takes up a ship in Jamaica, contracts for it after the termination of the voyage, and is consequently ignorant of those cruelties by which

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the negroes were procured, and of those discomforts and hardships which they are said, with too much reason, to labour under. No tax of inhumanity therefore, upon this score, can be laid upon him: on the contrary, as his interest is connected with his tenderness, *that becomes an object of policy*, to which those who are not acquainted with the relative situations of the master and the slave, would affix the appellation of feeling; and upon the cheerful appearance, and the bodily health of the latter, the first must depend for a brisk and a profitable sale.

The good negroes of a favourite country, let the price be what it will, are in general very soon disposed of; the more indifferent ones will not be purchased with much avidity; but the extent of credit, and reduction of terms, are temptations which those in the West- Indies who traffic in human flesh can rarely withstand: but those unhappy spectres that are become objects of commiseration from sickness, neglect, and

and want, and who perhaps at their departure from their native country, and before they fell under the inhuman gripe of commerce, were vigorous and healthy—these unhappy creatures, I had almost said these outcasts of interest, are frequently reduced to such a situation of bodily misery and mental despair, that their appearance alone, independently of the reflections it occasions, is sufficient to shock the eye of human nature, and would excite compassion to wish them, not an extended existence, but an early grave, in which they might bury at once themselves and their misfortunes.

Many of these poor wretches, too weak for exertion, and reduced by hunger to the extremities of life, are seen lying about the streets without clothing, without food, and without compassion; and it must surely be a slur upon our colonial laws, and a satire upon the humanity of individuals, if such objects are left to perish, unnoticed and unlamented.

Some

Some have not language to express their wants, and some are too much exhausted to sigh out the tremors of complaint; but hold out, with a wistful and desponding eye, & withered hand, in feeble token of their sufferings; and implore, but too often implore in vain, with all the eloquence of silent sorrow and patient resignation, a drop of water, or a crumb of bread, to sustain their declining bodies in the last struggles of humanity, and to ward off for a moment the impending horrors of death.

This melancholy picture is by no means over-coloured; and the legislature should certainly interfere in the correction of an abuse so very obvious; of an abuse so disgraceful to the privileges of reason, and so dishonourable to that religion, whose tenets are founded in mercy.

Of the rigorous dealing and persecution of the negro-merchant, it is very common among all classes of people in Jamaica to complain; but I greatly fear that more is to

be attributed upon this head to the impunctuality of him who buys, than to the want of liberality of him who sells.

When a man makes the purchase of a slave, he should have the justice to reflect that he has been entrusted with the property of another ; he should likewise have the liberality to consider, that the merchant must make good his payment at home, whatever disappointments he may meet with from abroad : his credit therefore, if not his character, is at stake ; and a failure of remittances of considerable extent and magnitude may subject him to present inconvenience at least, if not involve him in future ruin.

The extension of twelve or eighteen months credit is a temptation to many to buy, who in fact ought not to purchase ; and the consequences that will, and that must generally attend impunctuality, are serious and destructive.

**The**

The concerns of a negro-merchant are so extensive, that partiality would almost amount to injustice: if therefore the obligation be not discharged when due, the party is sued, a judgement obtained, and, if a writ of *Venditioni exponas* be executed, the negro is sold for one third perhaps of what he originally cost; and what seems to be a particular hardship, the consequence, whether politic or not, of the priority law, is the following practice: If the defendant be otherwise indebted, the property of the plaintiff will go towards the discharge of such judgements as are previous to his; although justice would incline us to think, that the man who sells, and is not paid, has the best right to a resumption of his own.

If a person shall purchase twenty negroes, and they shall originally cost him fifty pounds sterling per head, it is still a great chance but he lose one before the time that the first payment shall come round: and as new negroes ought to be treated

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with great tenderness at first, the produce of their labour will consequently be trifling ; while the expence of clothing, provisions, tools, and a person to attend them, independently of the doctor's bill, will be very considerable. They may import with them the disorders of Africa, or may contract the small-pox in the Islands ; by which means many may be swept off before they shall be seasoned to the climate, others may become weakly and disabled, and several of the remaining slaves may turn out runaways and rogues. These particulars therefore considered, it may easily be imagined how very great the diminution of their value must be, after such a list of contingencies.

I will even suppose that the purchaser shall have been peculiarly fortunate in their seasoning ; but let him be ever so successful in this respect, I do not think that he will be able, with the most unremitting attention, and with even a superfluity of food, to preserve and domesticate, in three

three years, more than one out of four who shall turn out a really industrious and efficient slave.

If therefore at the end of three years he lose, by a favourable calculation, five negroes out of twenty, he will be however obliged to pay, for this last number, although he shall only have fifteen remaining; and, what is still more mortifying, he must be conscious that he purchased them in health and vigour, and is only now the master of a remnant, many of which are reduced by hunger, some grown worthless, and do not altogether earn perhaps the interest (6 per cent.) of his debt; although he shall contrive, by the subtleties and consequent delays of the law, to stave off, as long as possible, the rigorous execution of the principal.

Of those who establish an independency by the purchase of negroes, the calculation will not, I believe, amount, if all circumstances be considered, to one in five; and I do

firmlly believe, that out of the astonishing numbers of judgements that are annually obtained in Jamaica on account of im-punctuality of payment, at least six out of seven are substantiated from a hasty and improvident purchase of slaves : and hence the ruinous expences of the law, indepen-dently of the miseries that a state of alter-cation engenders, must be added to the vexatious list of the adventurers misfor-tunes.

I know not any measure that could so effectually tend to the relief of the indebted planter, give so much quiet to his mind, and sunshine to his views, as a suppression, for a few years, of the introduction of African slaves ; for if they be to be sold, let the terms be what they may, provided only that credit and time be given, there will be always found imprudent and am-bitious men to purchase ; and if the owners of the soil cannot make such acquired pos-sessions answer, how are *those* to succeed who have not land, and are consequently without

without provisions, excepting such as they will be obliged to procure at an enormous expence in the country, and the resources of which are never sure?

In the hands of jobbers even, whose means depend upon their health and preservation, it is amazing what numbers of negroes die, before the former can raise a sufficient gang to procure them any profit by a regular and systematic train of industry; and as many of these adventurers are practitioners of physic, there seems to be some reason to conclude that they ought to be more successful than others; but I was not able to learn, during my residence in the Island, that such was absolutely the case.

The possessors of the old established properties in Jamaica, appear to me to be too much alarmed at the pending idea of an abolition of the slave-trade; an inhibition that would materially, in some instances, serve the planter of moderate expectations

and hopes, but which would certainly, on the other hand, help to damp the man of enterprise, considerably diminish the public revenue, and not only put a stop to an increase of cultivation in the Island, but likewise reduce to barrenness and deserts a great portion of that land which is now under the cultivation of canes : it would occasion additional labour to fall upon those slaves who are now in the colonies, and which it would be difficult for the most benevolent institutions, and the most salutary reformati<sup>n</sup>ons, ever to remove,

How far the African negroes may be affected by the humane interference of the British legislature in their particular favour, I am not competent to speak ; but, if abolition shall take place in consequence of the abuses and the enormities with which the traffic of slaves is attended ; and if emancipation shall be renounced as a visionary scheme, destructive to those who were meant to benefit from it, dangerous to the lives of the white people who are now settled

settled in the colonies, and ruinous to public and private property ; and if, in consequence of its impracticability, it shall be relinquished, it will then be prudent to blend philanthropy with interest, as it will be the triumph of humanity to loosen those bonds which have been too closely tied, and which have in consequence too often bruised.

Institutions may certainly be made in the colonies, to render the negroes as contented and happy as the peasantry are found to be in Europe ; nor do I think that such a reformation would be attended with much delay or trouble : but before they can feel the benefits of a wise and equal legislation, some alteration must be made in the manners and pursuits of those by whom they are at present governed ; and this position naturally brings me to a description of the inhabitants of the country.

In European communities there is a chain of subordination, that descends from link to link, which, while it preserves the strength of

of the whole, gives ease and motion to some particular parts ; and which, without constraint, ensures obedience : whereas, the levelling principle that obtains among the white people in Jamaica, entrenches upon the duties of society, and annihilates the bonds of power, and the good effects of subordination. On the other hand, as slaves are thrown at a distance from the ideas of equality, the weight of command does not descend by perceptible degrees, but falls at once to crush the timid, and to confound the bold ; although the inflicter of punishment may not perhaps be possessed of more reason, or more sense, than the unhappy wretch who suffers, and who, as he cannot resist, is obliged to succomb.

It is generally contended, that negroes have not the same ideas that those have by whom they are governed. In this they are happy, not having the same wishes to form, the same wants to gratify, and being contented with the possession of those goods which fall in their way, without encountering

tering those evils with which their search would be attended.

They know not the desperate alternative of crushing a friend, to stand erect upon his depression, and to rise into consequence from his ruin. They dream not, when awake, of riches; and not knowing the dangers of wealth, they feel, without perceiving it, the comforts of privation.

A rich man must depend upon others for comfort; a poor man, upon himself: the former lives for multitudes; the latter, for a community that is either personal, or circumscribed.

The man of opulence has cause of disappointment, vexation, and ingratitude, in every thing around him: he is teased by his servants; he is mortified by his dependents; and is perhaps neglected in the hour of trial, and abandoned in that of want, in proportion to the favours which, in prosperity, he had the inclination and the

the power to confer. Of consequences thus deduced, of miseries thus felt, of mortifications thus indured, the negroes are, from situation as well as feeling, exempted ; and their fears at least are transitory, although their enjoyments are far from being permanent : the first might be removed, and the last in some measure substantiated.

If they be but one degree removed from vegetable existence, as it is weakly, and I had almost said, as it has been impiously supposed, they are not oppressed by the weight, nor do they labour under the effects, of cogitation ; for the ideas of misery are in a tenfold proportion to those of happiness : and, as they are not made wretched by the pangs of an upbraiding conscience, they seem to be satisfied with those necessaries that support existence. But I must however confess, that I never found any negroes, either Creole or African, who were gifted with the powers of distinguishing morally, and not from example, the difference between a good and an evil action ;

action ; or who could reason upon the necessity of dependence here, or draw any feasible comfort from their liberty hereafter. As example therefore is the prominent feature of human government, and as they will consequently follow that which they see before them, how regular should be the conduct, and how steady the government, of those whom they are taught to look up to for imitation, and from whom they are to receive the doctrine of obedience !

I absolutely deny that they are incapable of mental instruction, and scientific improvement : on the contrary, I think the negroes apt, even those imported from Africa, and labouring under an ignorance of the manners and the language of the country, in the acquirement and perfection of the different trades, and the mechanical processes to which they are devoted, and which, I do insist, they learn with as much facility and perseverance as the white people do in Europe.

When

- When we consider under whom the generality of them are educated, if the negative routines of thought may be called an education, we shall be inclined to give them credit for what they know, when they have such melancholy prospects of being taught: and hence a description of the condition to which they are subject, and of those people by whom it is impressed, will more fully lead to the point I aim at, and help to establish those as corollaries, which might otherwise be considered as speculation.

A great number of the estates in Jamaica are in the hands of mortgagees in possession; and these are commonly found to be a description of people who call themselves West-India merchants. I am conscious that I now stand upon slippery ground; that the least false step will help to sink me, and that an absolute fall will reduce me to a situation to rise perhaps no more; but, as I profess to speak from facts, I will commend

commend where I can, and blame where I ought.

The merchant lends money to the planter, provides his English stores and Irish provisions, disposes of his sugar and rum upon commission, and directs the management, and receives the profit, of any shipping with which he may be imprudently engaged: I say, imprudently, because, in an adventure of this kind, the master of the ship, if he be part owner, and the husband, are those only who, in time of peace, can make any interest of their money.

The merchant's commission is  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. upon insurances,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. upon all the produce which is addressed to his house for sale, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. upon what he pays, or, in other words,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. upon sales and invoices, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. upon receipts and payments. He charges interest at £ $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for what he advances: and it is the custom to carry the interest to the principal every

every year, and thus make it an augmenting sum.

Those of opulence and punctuality, who can afford to pay ready money for every thing they buy, are accustomed to deduct 5 per cent. in the article of stores; but among those who move in a more dependent sphere no such allowance is made.

The Irish merchant makes a charge of 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for the exportation of his own goods; a practice that is somewhat singular, and which does not seem to be founded upon the common and equitable principles of commerce: and, what is still more extraordinary, the English merchant does the same.

A planter who is indebted to his merchant, labours under many pecuniary mortifications and disappointments; and, should the latter be distressed by the magnitude of the sum advanced, or by a mode of living superior to his means and situation in life, he must have recourse to the pecuniary aid

aid of others, the consequence of which has frequently been (if his broker shall happen to be the party to whom he has been obliged), that the sugars which he has had orders to insure, are sold to disadvantage before their arrival, or the samples, when purchased, are averaged at a price very far below their real value.

If the planter shall have occasioned the distress of the merchant, and shall have driven him to the necessity of supporting at all events his tottering credit, he must, as he ought in justice, to stand to the consequence; and if his property shall, on this account, be sold to less advantage, his connexion with the latter is such, that, however he may complain, he knows not how to find redress.

If a person happen to be connected with a man of respectability and credit, it is notorious that he obtains a much larger price for his produce than he would receive

from one of a different character ; and if he be even engaged with a needy house, and to that house is not indebted, he will still find a more favourable return for his consignments than if he were encumbered.

Where merchants have many correspondents, it has been too often a practice, I am told, to show samples of sugar from different estates, and then to strike a general average between the good and bad ; a practice that is not founded upon justice, whatever excuse it may have in expediency, or the saving of delay and trouble : for suppose the merchant should be himself possessed of a sugar-plantation, and the produce of it were indifferent, compared to that which he has upon sale from different properties—suppose this were the case, and he could so far forget honour in interest, as to average his bad with what is better, what suspicion would it not occasion in his correspondents !

It

It is certainly more to the advantage of the planter to borrow money from any hand, even although he were to allow for it at the rate of 6 per cent. than to take it from his merchant at 5, provided he be in consequence tied up to consign to him his future produce: for when once the former becomes indebted to the latter in such a sum as he would find it difficult to raise at a short warning upon a West-India security, from that moment he becomes dependent, and perhaps for life. He gives perhaps a pledge that is worth £20,000, to cover a debt of £ 5,000; a judgement is obtained, to secure the priority of all he has; he is ejected from his estate; it falls into the hands of the mortgagee in possession; the crops decrease, the value of the property sinks, and the whole of it is perhaps sold at last to pay off the encumbrance, and the creditor purchases for £ 5,000 what was absolutely worth at least double the sum: and this is a practice, and a fact too well established to admit of refutation.

I never knew a property fall under the management of mortgagees in possession, even where the sum was trifling, and the property was large, that was ever redeemed : and I have the experience of nearly thirteen years to enable me to substantiate this bold assertion. I have, on the contrary, heard of estates that have been indebted to the amount of their value, that have, in nearly the same space of time, not only greatly reduced, but entirely expunged, every encumbrance upon them.

It is customary with the liberal creditor to suffer the indebted planter to reside upon his mortgaged premises, to superintend the white people, and to direct the cultivation of the land ; to dispose of his rum to discharge the contingencies of the country, to recommend captains of ships to convey his stores to the island, and to have the preference of freight to England, and to be indulged with such articles and conveniences as the plantation affords ; to have the liberty to reside upon it, and likewise to

to share the same emoluments that an attorney would have ; and under such a compact the planter may not have much to apprehend, nor the merchant much to fear, as confidence is the best connective band of interest ; whereas dissension and distrust, while they sour the mind, will ultimately conduct to ruin.

To be, on the other hand, forbidden the least interference whatever with his concerns, to be proceeded against to the utmost remnant of his means, to be deprived of common subsistence ; and, to encrease his mortification, to behold all at once a man become his master, who but a few years before was contented to be his servant ; all these are bitter circumstances which the planter too often suffers, and which it is certainly heart-breaking to endure.

The rapacious and the unfeeling merchant is not always so scrupulous about

the character of the agent he employs, as he is about his obedience. Of his integrity perhaps he does not require a proof, and is equally indifferent whether he has been accustomed to the tiller, or is at all acquainted with the nature of the land. If he but follow his instructions, and will once condescend to second his views upon the property, of which he has the direction, he seems to care very little whether the proprietor perish for want, or languish in a prison ; and it is a reproach to the practice of thus passing property from one hand to the other, to see the comfort and affluence with which some attornies to mortgagees live, while at the same time the proprietor of the estate is refused a dwelling upon it, and is struggling under the accumulated miseries of contempt and want.

Some attornies are resident at the opposite parts of the island to those in which the properties for which they are engaged  
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are placed ; some are merchants, some are doctors, some are lawyers, and some have even been indented servants.

The relative situations of merchant and planter naturally make them dependent upon one another ; and if the latter shall have been harassed, distressed, and ruined by the rapacity of the former, yet has the last been, in many instances, saved by the friendship, and made independent and happy by the credit of the first.

Among those descriptions of people I well know that complaints and crimination are too often exchanged for confidence and fellow-feeling ; and *that* property can never flourish, when *one* attempts to injure what it is the interest of the *other* to save.

One inconvenience the merchant certainly labours under ; and as it is a pecuniary inconvenience, it comes home to his situa-

tion, and cannot fail to interest his feelings.

He hazards a portion of his capital, if he have any; or he pledges the credit of his name, if it can raise money, upon a foreign adventure, upon a country and soil, of the nature and quality of which he is entirely ignorant: he depends upon the skill and upon the conduct of the planter for the preservation of his advance, for the returns of interest, and as a kind of compensation for the consignment of his goods; he furnishes what is necessary for the support of the plantation, or what he may more immediately require for his domestic uses: their connexion therefore, considered in this point of view, appears to be tight, and their interests and mutual dependencies so intimately blended together, that the least discordance would unhinge the machine, and clog at least, if not for ever break, the springs of action; and against such a disunion, it should be the wish of both to guard.

If

If the merchant, in consequence of im-punctuality, mismanagement, or vicious habits, should think it necessary to redeem his pledge (but misfortunes, I should hope, the liberal mind would compassionate, and the failure of engagements, if impossible for the planter to fulfil them, excuse)—if, I say, he find it of consequence to call in his money, he must appoint an agent abroad, upon whom he must depend for justice; or who, on the contrary, he may tax, as is sometimes the case, with either inattention, or an unwillingness to persecute his friend: but so soon as he becomes (in consequence of having found a person of less scruple and delicacy of conduct) in possession of the mortgaged properties, he will soon be able to bribe the servant to betray the master, the dependent to sacrifice his benefactor, and to second him perhaps in all his schemes of inhumanity and insult.

Among those who professionally undertake the direction of Jamaica estates, and conduct

conduct them for their constituents at home, there are people, as before observed, of various descriptions, from the ignorant to the intelligent, and from the responsible to the dependent. Some act from principle, and some from interest ; some do good, and some do mischief : and those properties are, I think, in general the best managed, upon which the attorneys do not reside; but who, acknowledging their ignorance of the cultivation of the soil, and of the various processes of sugar-making, have the modesty and sense to depend upon the scientific and the experienced, without any other interference perhaps than that of making them responsible for their conduct, and of discouraging and discarding the worthless, and of rewarding and confiding in the meritorious.

The attorney draws 6 per cent. upon the produce of the plantation ; makes an allowance, according to its extent and revenues, to a person to keep the books of the property, and to do in his absence such business

business as the overseer, from a different line of occupation, is either incompetent to, or has not leisure to superintend. He appoints the overseer, and affixes his salary according to his pretensions and his skill; and among this class of people I have seen and been personally acquainted with some, that are an honour to their profession, and who would make as responsible agents as those by whom they have been, in a subordinate capacity, employed.

The attorney who manages for the proprietor in England, derives his emoluments from the produce of the property, and charges 6 per cent. for every thing he makes, and every thing he sells; and if he be not scrupulous in his trust, he may likewise draw many other advantages from his situation, which some have not scrupled to take. He may order the estates to supply him with corn, may direct their carts to carry it; may be from thence supplied with mules for his servants, and with provisions and delicacies for himself; and may likewise

likewise order the attendance of any negroes he may prefer, to wait upon him in menial capacities : and all this he may do, and all this is often done, without any ceremony or compensation.

If he have extensive concerns, he is followed about the country with a retinue of carriages, of servants, and of horses, which shake the ground as they thunder along ; and when he arrives upon the plantation, the command goes forth, to catch and kill ; the table is covered with profusion, and few are suffered to go empty, I had almost said sober, away.

There is not a profession in the country so much sought after as this ; and if it be not the most honourable, it is certainly the most profitable, and that in which is often displayed the greatest mediocrity of talents : for a situation that individually does not either require thought, or insist upon action, may be equally exercised by the vacant and inactive. The only things required

required, are confidence and protection from home, an hospitable way of life in the island, a costly table, a full cellar, and good attendance ; and if you have besides an easy carriage, and an ambling horse, “ all “ the rest shall be added unto you.”

The business of an attorney, when residing upon the plantation, is to attend the overseer in a circuitous visit of the cane fields, and to obtain from him a calculation of what they may produce ; and as his emoluments arise from the magnitude of the crops, his interest will point out the means of making them productive ; and hence the exorbitant expence of hired labour will be added, to swell the list of payments under which the planter already labours, and for which, in seasons of storms and famine, he may find it very difficult, if not impossible, to provide : the attorney having the means of payment in his own hands, may say “ that charity begins at “ home,” and provides for his own wants before he considers those of his employer.

He

He makes it a point to be upon good terms with the captains of ships, and all those in short who have an opportunity to report favourably of him to his constituents in England ; and according to the extent of his concerns, will be his consequence, and the respect that will be shown to him in the country.

Of this description of persons there are many who hold the first places in the community, and who are independent legislators, useful magistrates, and men of property ; and who are besides attentive and just to the interest of their employers, and respectable both in public and private life : but yet I must still say, that I do not think even the best of them are so successful in the management of a property which they conduct under a mortgagee in possession, as when they hold the direction under the appointment, and the confidence, of the planter alone ; and I must still observe, that the latter will be in general found to be the best steward of his own

own affairs, as his own interest would be so much blended with his conduct; and his negroes would more cheerfully obey his orders than attend to those of strangers; and they will go forward with warmer hopes of a redress of their complaints, to him who is so much a party in their content and welfare, than they would to one who has not the same motives to direct him.

When a merchant and a planter shall have found it necessary to enter into terms for their mutual government and safety, I think it always bad policy, and ruinous to both, when the latter is deprived of the possession and management of his estate. The former might appoint an attorney to see his rights ascertained, and that justice be in the first instance done to his claims respecting the consignments, the payment of contingencies, and for whatever sums he is, from the nature of the connexion, become responsible: but the actual possession and superintendence should still continue in

in the proprietor of the soil ; for there is hardly a situation more deplorable than one of this last description, when he is obliged to turn out of his own house, without any provision being made for his wants, to make room for a man who was perhaps only the day before his servant and dependent.

If the creditor could only know the heart-felt miseries, and the neglect and insult which the planter sustains, when, in consequence of debts accumulated by the dreadful visitations that have descended from the hand of God, or the unfeeling rapacity and inhumanity of man ;—if the rigorous could only feel what he endures at being ejected from his home, deprived of his attendants, and struggling under disease, and without a common subsistence to procure the means of life, he would startle at the power which the law, or an unguarded confidence, has given him ; and would ultimately find, that his views of interest

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or importance would hardly compensate the reproach with which his rigour would be attended.

I would recommend it to the planter, to consider how very serious a thing it is, to become indebted to a merchant of an illiberal and parsimonious turn of mind ; and to be particularly cautious how he entrusts him with a security that is of great magnitude compared to a small advance. That he should be just and punctual, his interest will point out the necessity, as well as the advantage : but it is much better to suffer at once a pecuniary humiliation and distress, than to behold a weight in continual pendency above him, when he has every reason to think that it will, some time or other, descend and crush him.

The merchant wants no caution to remind him of his interest : if he meet with disappointment, he has recourse to his security at last ; and by advancing money upon

pledges of land in Jamaica, I have never heard that one has ultimately been a loser : but the instances of ruin to the planter under such bonds have been too frequent to require proof.

It will not, I hope, be imagined that I wish to throw the most distant reflections upon merchants of credit and honour : they are beyond my reach, and would look down with contempt upon him who could have the injustice to revile them. My remarks and strictures therefore will only apply to those of a different cast ; and to them, if any such there be, I will not even condescend to make an apology.

When the proprietor takes upon himself the management of his own plantation, there are many little circumstances which he attends to as objects of amusement, which an attorney might possibly consider as irksome and disgusting ; and who thinks, and perhaps wisely, that he very fully discharges his duty if he superintend the gross  
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of affairs, without entering into those minutiae which, being trifles, are better neglected.

The planter is in general too fond of trying experiments; and his private caprice cannot fail to injure his public views. If a man be clear of debt, and is contented with what he has, the community ought to think itself obliged to every individual who may make them. He is the only person who can be injured by the mis-carriage; and by his failure of success no creditor is hurt: but in those of a contrary description, the strait road of management will more certainly conduct to ease or wealth.

Every planter entertains a good opinion of his own management; and being sanguine in his expectations, he is of consequence very frequently deceived. He is tempted, in proportion to his expectations, to purchase negroes and stock; and hence increases his debts, which were before

oppressive : whereas, if he would be satisfied with what the strength and condition of his estate would give him, without clogging its wheels with unnecessary expence, he might be enabled to wipe off annually some portion of his encumbrances ; and when the merchant finds that his correspondent provides with punctuality for the interest, and reduces, from year to year, however little, the principal sum, his confidence will probably increase, and he may be disposed to make allowances for seasons of hurricanes and droughts.

As the planter seems to be the spring of action in the West-Indies, his manners have an effect upon those of the country. Every one pretends to be, more or less, a man of business ; and trifles appear of consequence to those who are not habituated to the practice of regular and systematic occupation.

For the interested bustles of life, for that industry that begets wealth, and that circumspection

cumspetion that knows how to keep it, there is not a character in the world less adapted than a West-Indian. Unsteady in thought, and desultory in action, he knows not how to combine his ideas for use, nor to direct their exertion to a given point. His warmth of temper is not followed by a coolness of judgement ; but then I have seldom known the heat of passion conduct him to revenge. Too indolent for the exertions of the mind, his body seems to partake of its languor ; and though his spirits will sometimes lead him to the highest flights of extravagance, yet will reflection often sink him to the lowest despair. His disposition is, in some instances, not unlike that of a Frenchman, who is as easily elevated, as soon depressed. He is seldom a miser, and more often a spend-thrift than barely generous ; and when he is impunctual, I should rather attribute it in many instances to a want of arrangement, and a foresight of contingencies, than to the failure of an honest principle.

It is somewhat singular, that there is hardly an instance of a Creole who has excelled in the liberal professions, or in works of genius : and for this it would be difficult to account, were it not in some manner apparent from their natural indolence, and aversion to one steady and unremitting pursuit. Of one quality they are certainly possessed, and that is hospitality ; and which may, in some measure, cover their other failings : nor do I think that their generosity is often the handmaid of ostentation.

Their lives are certainly full of vexation and trouble : their means depending upon the favour of the climate, and the preservation of a capital so liable to incidents and mortality, make them look for danger when remote, and anticipate misfortunes that may not happen. They live well while they have the means ; and think, perhaps too much, upon the entertainment that they are to give their friends : and this anxiety of making welcome, and of crowding their table with profusion, and of drinking, very frequently,

frequently, to excess, is a custom that prevails too much among all classes of people in the country.

The women in Jamaica superintend the domestic affairs, and provide for the necessaries and comforts of the table. Their occupations are always unpleasant, and they too often meet with causes of disgust. In that Island they suffer much, submit to much, and lead a life of toil and misery, which the most commendable patience, and the most amiable resignation, cannot brook, though doomed to bear.

The overseer has many advantages of comfort, which his employer cannot share. He has few wishes, and few cares : his provisions are found him, and those he enjoys without expence or trouble. His profession does not subject him to labour, nor his situation make him responsible : he may be discharged indeed for mal-practices, but cannot be punished for neglect, excepting

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in cases of notoriety which call aloud for public example. He directs the management of the property, if he have a sensible driver and obedient negroes, with ease to himself ; and his daily orders recur, and are executed, without investigation, and without punishment. If the gross of business be well attended to, he is not difficult about trifles. He takes his daily rides into the cane-pieces, to see that the work goes on with regularity and dispatch ; and when he is absent, the book-keeper attends ; but the driver is the person whom he trusts. In crop-time he does not continue much in the field, but gives his particular attention to the works, and takes care that the negroes are not idle, and that they do not waste, or steal, the produce. These remarks apply to a person of character and diligence ; nor have I had any personal connexion with any people of this rank, whose honesty I could impeach, or whose industry upbraid.

Upon

Upon some plantations there are many white people engaged; and the full establishment will be found to consist of the overseer, with a salary from £.100 sterling, to two, three, or more; a distiller, with £.40; two book-keepers, with £.30 or £.20; a mason, a carpenter, a blacksmith, and perhaps a cooper and a wheelwright, at different rates, from indented servants at £.50 a year, to £.100, or more. For these the overseer provides; and these he directs and superintends in their different avocations. Upon some properties there is besides a doctor, upon a fixed salary; but otherwise he is allowed 5s. currency per head for every negro, and finds the medicines himself.

The above is a large establishment; and the average of estates in the Island are contented with an overseer at £.100 a year, and one, or, at most two book-keepers: but every white man will stand the property in the full amount of his salary besides.

Where

Where there are many servants, there will be but little work ; and that which is expected to be done by many, will be frequently at last left undone by one. Besides, the lower classes of white people in Jamaica are unworthy of confidence and power : they are idle, drunken, worthless, and immoral ; and it is chiefly owing to the infamy of *their* example, that the negroes become idle, and turn out thieves and villains. Until therefore a reformation can be made in the manners of those with whom the slaves are so much connected, it will be impossible to enact any salutary and efficient institutions for their better government, for the decency of their conduct, the improvement of their minds, or the enforcing the comfortable or the moral duties of obedience.

It was my intention to have been more minute in my description of the manners, occupations, and customs of the negroes in Jamaica ; but as the fate of  
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the colonies seems to be now involved in the popular question of an abolition of the slave-trade, I shall defer my observations upon this subject, until the frenzy of the moment shall be abated, and the voice of reason shall allay that tempest, which a measure so replete with danger cannot fail to excite. I shall therefore be at present contented to notice such particulars as may help to explain their comforts ; and shall leave their sufferings to be insisted upon by those who have had more occasion than myself to pity their misfortunes.

I shall be, I hope, excused if I dwell a little upon the *seeming* misery of their situations, and then contrast the subjection of their lives with the needy *independency* of the poor of England.

The idea of slavery, abstractedly considered, appears to an Englishman both offensive and insupportable; and he blindly attaches

attaches a horror to the word, without strictly scanning its necessity or meaning.

The negroes are slaves by nature ; and custom and necessity oblige them to bear with patience and resignation what by force or will they cannot obtain. They have no idea of the charms of liberty ; nor have they an education to give them a knowledge of its meaning, or any pursuits of ambition to make them desire it : but it may be said, that every human creature has the same original right to the kind dispositions and benevolent intentions of our Creator : it would however fill the world with misery and confusion, had every one the indiscriminate power to enjoy them. All that a West-Indian can then do, in a situation in which fortune has placed him to be in authority over others of a different complexion, but perhaps of the same feelings with himself, is, to make humanity and justice the rules of his general conduct ; for it is certainly better, and more con-

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sonant to the professions of our religion, to relax on the side of mercy, than to be rigid on that of power.

The negroes are clothed and fed at the expence of the master. If they work well, and cheerfully, they meet with indulgence; if sick, they are attended with care, and relieved with humanity; as much, perhaps, from a principle of policy, as from a motive of commiseration. If they obey the orders of the overseer, they seldom fail of proper encouragement: if they be worthless they must expect correction; and the mode of punishment in Jamaica is by no means so rigorous as that of the naval and military discipline of England. The common husbandmen, and I had almost said the mechanics, in this last country, undergo greater hardships, and bend under more afflictions, than the generality of slaves in the former, whose conditions are much misrepresented by the advocates for humanity in Europe. The indolent only, and

and the ill-disposed, encounter punishments ; but this is a fate that attends people of this description in every country.

Let us now consider the situation of a needy labourer in England : let us suppose him incapable of exertion, from the infirmity of years, or from any constitutional defect of mind or body. Let us suppose him to be surrounded by a young, and consequently, an helpless family ; with a wife sitting by him, in all the bitterness of soul lamenting the cause that has deprived him of labour, and his family of the means of bread. To heighten the shadows of the picture, let us add to this afflicted group an aged parent, who is watching the dying embers by the chimney side, and joining his sighs and tears to the general misfortune. Let us paint, at a distance, by way of back - ground, the figure of an inhuman landlord, demanding from wretchedness and want what he cannot always obtain from happiness and wealth ; for

for how can such a family discharge a rent, and that perhaps an exorbitant one, when the common means of subsistence are wanting, and when industry itself must prove ineffectual ?

The manners of the negroes, and the general appearance of the better kind of the black and mulatto slaves, are by no means rude and vulgar : in some indeed, there is a decency, a propriety of behaviour observed, that would shame many of the lower classes of the white women in Jamaica, upon the minutiae of whose lives, and the cast of whose employment, I have been, from motives of delicacy, silent : nor would I alarm the feelings of the more respectable, by enumerating pursuits which necessity imposes ; but which, I trust, are not always sanctioned by the willing propensities of the heart.

When the negroes assemble at Christmas, or upon any extraordinary occasion,  
they

they equip themselves with a certain degree of elegance. They are particularly fond of beads, coral, glass, and chains, and with which they adorn their necks and wrists : they array themselves in the finest linen, in the purchase of which they betray a determined extravagance, which many people may think not at all compatible with their situations ; but if the resources of a good negro were really ascertained, and the few wants of a bad one known, the condition of the first, and the little care of the last, would remove the slur that is cast upon humanity, and the tax that is laid upon justice.

The women take a pride in the number of their coats, and are not contented with any but what are made from the best materials, of which likewise their hats and handkerchiefs are commonly composed ; and it must be acknowledged, that their taste in dress is in perfect correspondence to their situation and colour.

They

They are extremely fond of music and dancing; they have good ears, and preserve the most perfect tune and time. Their musical instruments indeed (the Caramantee flutes and the bender excepted, of which I have before spoken (with an omission however of a slender stick which the player of the last-mentioned instrument presses to the string a little below his mouth, to graduate the vibration), their musical instruments, if such they may be called, consist of a bonjour, originally taken, perhaps, from a French word, as many have found their way by corruption among the negroes; a kind of Spanish guitar; a cotter, upon which they beat with sticks; a gomba, which they strike with their hands; a drum; a box filled with pebbles, which they shake with their wrists; and, to close the account, the jaw-bone of an animal, from which is produced a harsh and disagreeable sound: and it may easily be imagined, when these all together join in chorus, and are accompanied by a number of voices, what kind of music must assail, and fill the ear.

Their style of dancing is by no means ungraceful ; and the different groups in which they assemble themselves upon these occasions, would make very picturesque subjects for a painter. They generally meet before their houses, and sometimes in the pastures under the shade of trees, where, if allowed, they will continue their favourite diversions from night to morning.

Their principal festivals are at their burials, upon which occasions they call forth all their magnificence, and display all their taste ; and the expence with which the funerals of the better sort of negroes upon a plantation are attended, very often exceed the bounds of credibility ; and of this position many instances might be given. Their bodies lie in state ; an assemblage of slaves from the neighbourhood appears : the body is ornamented with linen and other apparel, which has been previously purchased, as is often the custom, for this solemn occasion ; and all the trinkets of the defunct are exposed in the coffin,

coffin, and buried in the grave with the remains. The bier is lined with cambric and with lace ; and when closed, it is covered with a quantity of expensive cloth, upon which are sometimes deposited wines and other liquors for the recreation of the guests, while a hog, poultry, and other viands, are offered up as an expiatory sacrifice. When the body is carried to the grave, they accompany the procession with a song ; and when the earth is scattered over it, they send forth a shrill and noisy howl, which is no sooner re-echoed, in some cases, than forgotten.

After this ceremony, which in civilized countries is considered as a melancholy one, but of which few traces can be found in the sepulture of a negro, the affected tear is soon dried, the pretended sigh is soon suppressed, and the face of sorrow becomes at once the emblem of joy. The instruments resound, the dancers are prepared ; the day sets in cheerfulness, and the night resounds with the chorus of

contentment ; and the day only rises to awaken in their minds the regret of a necessary departure, and to summon them to their expected work.

Happy, and in some instances enviable, is this state of insensibility ! nor will *be* be scandalized who looks into our cathedrals and houses of mortality, in which so many hundreds are yearly buried without any accompaniment, but a vacant question, ‘ Who was he ? Poor man ! I am sorry for him. It is, alas ! what we must all come to. He is happy in death, and I am as yet content with life.’

As an evil, few negroes consider death in this light. I never knew one who did, or who either dreaded it by anticipation, or who was apprehensive when it was hovering near. In opposition to this fact, how are we to account for the weakness of Haller and Johnson ? of two men who rendered life valuable by their writings, and who taught us, whatever was their example,

example, that there was no fear in death until it came. Peace to their manes ! and let those only whose practice in this mortal state has been like theirs, presume to say how a man, and a philosopher, ought to die.

## THE CONCLUSION.

IN the foregoing pages I have described, according to my abilities, what I have seen, and what I know : and I have given an account of the seasons as I have observed them, and of the cultivation of the cane and plantain-tree, throughout their various stages, from a long and intimate knowledge of their growth ; and I trust, that my different remarks upon the country and the negroes may be found just, although many objects of description may not have been examined with the same attention, nor seen exactly with the same eyes.

When I left Jamaica in the year 1777, the country bare the appearance of approaching plenty ; the estates were recovering, in some measure, from that general desolation which a succession of storms had unhappily occasioned : but the consequences of

of those convulsions of nature are still felt, and will for ever depress the expectations, and stifle the hopes, of the unsupported ; who have not had means or credit to renew that strength and those resources which drought and famine, and mortality in consequence thereof, have so mournfully deprived them : and, should the abolition of the slave trade, contrary to humanity in some instances, and derogatory to policy in all, take place, the little they have remaining will wear away by degrees, and they and their families will be ultimately left to starve.

Of what avail is land in Jamaica, without negroes, and without stock ? And if the soil is to be neglected from the speculations of humanity alone, the same idea would apply to the labourers of other countries, to the free-born Englishmen, and to the European slaves of Poland and the Valteline.

The amusements of the negroes betray a contentment and independency of mind, which I have not often beheld in other people; and if we impartially compare their employments, after the setting day commands a remission of toil, with those of the peasantry of other climes, we shall see them retire to their houses with a cheerful step, and a jocund mind, while the latter are obliged to continue their evening and nocturnal toil in the painful provision of fuel, and of the other necessaries of life, to support a helpless family, an aged parent, or a worthless son. After these shall have been provided, an unfeeling steward may enter at their doors; and although the rains shall spout in torrents through the thatch, and not one corner of the hovel shall be dry; although they shall have toiled from the rising to the setting sun, and have been obliged to work in the night, and to labour in their dreams; yet are their remonstrances neglected, and their miseries unrelieved: their goods are distrained; they are turned out of doors, and their families wan-

der

der vagrants over the face of the earth ; or end their melancholy days, and broken-hearted, in a gaol.

I have seen the peasantry and the poor of many countries; and, I hope, under the idea of obtaining knowledge : I have had a personal opportunity of knowing their natural resources, of ascertaining their fictitious wants, and of being made acquainted with their ultimate dependence : and upon this ground, I am not afraid to advance, that I cannot recollect many situations, which from a superiority of local comforts I could point out as happy, compared to that of a good, and of a well-appointed slave : and even the very worst may be protected, supported, and made contented if they will.

The West-India Islands seem, for some years past, to have been marked by a fluctuation of calamities ;—by the distresses of foreign war, by the interruption of internal peace

peace : and those properties which the enemy has spared, are now likely to be ruined by that country to which they have been taught to look up for protection.

The visitations of the Almighty in hurricanes, in drought, and famine, the scourges of war, with the destructive accompaniments of martial law, of a remission of industry, and an augmentation of expence, have been misfortunes under which their inhabitants have lately bent ; and from those inflictions of Heaven, and depressions of men, the Islands are but just recovering, when, lo ! an innovation is introduced, to break the bonds of harmony and peace, to annihilate that dependency which is the chain of social compact, and to destroy that obedience which is the cement of government, and which, being a relative duty in life, connects, preserves, and keeps entire and well balanced, that machine which the least preponderation on either side would injure, or destroy.

Three

Three successive years of quiet and abundance would have helped to instill fresh spirits, and to open new hopes, to those inhabitants who were lately sunk by the pressure of events; and who would more boldly have erected their heads, and looked forward to more happy prospects: a more confidential intercourse would have subsisted in the commercial negotiations of the country; and the haunts of society would have appeared again to smile with looks of congratulation, and the heart to have expanded with convivial pleasure and hospitality; and the debtor would have looked the creditor in the face with the confidence of payment, and importunity would have been lost in the willingness of advance.

Such began to be the promise of the recovering Isles, when, lo! a calamity superior to any above mentioned stalks forth at large, and confounds at once all ranks and descriptions of people; and which, if carried to further excess, will end in treachery, famine, or the sword.

It

It is not to be supposed that any people, however they may wish to be obedient to the laws, will tamely submit to see their means of existence unjustly torn from them, at once, without their consent, and without a compensation : and, after the struggles of America, it could hardly be thought that any ideas could enter into the system of British politics, that could convert encouragement into tyranny, and make speculation triumph over expediency, necessity, and justice. The tongue of humanity has certainly a right to speak, and her voice should be undoubtedly heard ; but the ends that are to be obtained by an inquiry into abuses, ought to be in consequence of abuses proved, and not barely to be taken up upon the suggestions, and the *ipse dixit* of any man, or description of men.

If the Islands be of such little consequence to the mother country, why send out troops for their defence, which cannot be of service ? why erect fortifications that would moulder away at the appearance of

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an enemy ? why swell the public burdens, and sacrifice the private peace and health of individuals, too many of whom have already fallen unhappy victims to the climate ?

As the fate of the colonies now hangs by a slender thread, it is the duty of every one concerned in their preservation, to work his ideas into the general web, that strength may be given to the general mass ; and to this end the rotten parts should be extracted, the weak repaired, and the whole be made, if not beautiful, at least consistent : and I cannot help wishing that those who are possessed of more skill, had had my experience in the management of negroes, and that the errors I have committed may be corrected for the future service of those whose fortune it may be to engage in the same pursuits, and whom I sincerely wish a more general success than I have found.

It was my intention to contrast some of the most awful and sublime views that I have

have seen in other countries, with those which a long residence in Jamaica, and a constant observation of nature in her most varied forms, had enabled me to make : but from this I was discouraged by the growing size of the work, which has already far exceeded in bulk my original intention. I had fully determined however to delineate some of the most wild and romantic situations of Switzerland, that had fallen under my own observation : but here my presumption has been happily restrained by an attentive, and hence a pleasing and instructive, perusal of Mr. Coxe's letters, descriptive of that stupendous region ; and of which, separated as I had unfortunately long been from all literary information, I had not received any account when the preceding pages were committed to the press : and which letters preclude any description of those scenes which he has observed with a just and poetic eye, which he has discriminated like a painter, explained like a philosopher, and felt like a man.

The

The bay of Port-Royal may be, without degradation, opposed to that of Naples ; for the idea of a town submerged beneath the waves, and the ruins of which are still visible in the depths of the ocean, cannot fail to excite ideas of a grand and romantic cast ; while the aspiring appearance of Vesuvius, whose columns of smoke are observed to blacken the clouds, as its eruptions have devasted the earth, may pour a different train of reflections upon the mind of him who, from effects, may be inclined to revert to causes, and endeavour to explain the operations of nature in the destruction she has occasioned.

I have often thought that a Georgic might be composed from the various seasons of Jamaica, the progressive labours of the negroes, the tendence of the cattle, the cultivation of the fields, the manufacture of sugar, and from the various descriptions and reflections which they naturally occasion ; and I have not the least doubt, if the classic and poetic Mr. Mason had seen that

that country, that he would have preferred a subject so open to genius, and in which taste and learning might have been ap- positely applied, to that of English gar- dening, which admits of the pleasing indeed, the tranquil, and refined ; but in which the sublimities of inundations, the effects of thunder, and the dread of storms, bear no proportion of descriptive imagery. The fancy might likewise find many pauses in which to introduce the episode, to insert the metaphor, to weep with the afflicted, and to rejoice at the punishment of ty- rants.

The pastoral world in that region is full of charms, and these are obvious at every turn ; nor would the knowledge and prac- tice of improvement be without incentives to awaken study, and to perfect genius.

The different elements seem to be more discriminated in that country than in any other. The fire rages in all the splendours of devastation ; the water pours down from the

the clouds in deluges ; the inundations or overwhelm, or hide the earth ; while the raging sea accumulates her briny mountains, and pours her vengeance on the shores. The earth is disturbed, and shaken by tremendous heavings ; the mountains and the rocks are rent asunder, and towns, with all their inhabitants, are either swallowed up, or are entombed alive ; while the air, collected into winds, rushes forth upon the wings of desolation and of death, destroys at once their labours and their hopes, and even teaches the infidel to know that he is not beyond the reaching arm of Almighty vengeance.

Than the views of Jamaica, and those of England, no impressions can be more dissimilar : and if we have not, in the first region, as objects of picturesque beauty, the swelling tower that breasts the clouds, and the steeple whose angles divide the showers ; if we have not there the lofty spire that pierces the mist, or the venera-

ble ruin to project the shade ; yet are there other objects of rural imagery, that may in some measure supply their place, and that may equally interest from the darkness of their masses, and the grandeur of their forms.

In leaving Jamaica, I took a melancholy farewell of a country in which my fortune had very greatly suffered from the repeated visitations of Heaven, and in which I much endured in consequence of my own imprudence. I left many liberal and confiding creditors; some acquaintances whom I shall ever remember with respect; and some friends and relations whom I shall think upon with gratitude, and regard with veneration and with love.—And these I left—for what? My situation but too plainly speaks; and he who could hold out one hand in pledge of amity, and with the other invite the ministers of shame and sorrow, may sometimes blush to know by whom it was occasioned.

Cut

Cut off at once upon my arrival from all possibility of treating with those to whom I was indebted, and in quest of a change of climate to recover a constitution broken down by sickness and affliction ; after having left a country in which slavery is established by law, I found myself a prisoner, unheard, and unarraigned, in one in which arrest is sanctioned, though contrary to the constitution, and in which I have found that a man, although born to freedom, may become a slave.

T H E   E N D.

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